AFTER THE BATTLE

HITLER ON THE WESTERN FRONT

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Front cover: It has previously been said that this well-known picture of Hitler on his tour of the Western Front in 1940 was taken at the Lille Gate in Ypres. However, Jean Paul discovered that the shot had actually been taken in Kauwekijnstraat, with the Menin Gate behind the photographer. From L-R: SS-Obersturmführer Pfeiffer, ordnance officer; SS-Untersturmführer Linge, Hitler's valet; Hitler; Major Engel, his army adjutant.

Centre pages, left: At Vimy, General der Infanterie Hoth briefed Hitler and his party on the terrace of the Canadian Memorial. In the background the figure of 'Canada in Mourning' was still covered by wooden shuttering to protect it from being damaged in the recent battle.

Centre pages, right: At Bouchain, Hitler and his retinue walk up Rue d'Ostrevant. In the front row, from left to right: Generaloberst von Kluge, Hitler, General Heitz, Generaloberst Keitel. In the second row: Reichsleiter Dr Dietrich (off von Kluge's right shoulder), Reichsleiter Bormann and Hauptmann von Below (between von Kluge and Hitler) and SS-Obersturmbannführer Dr Brandt (to Keitel's left).

Back cover: Beryl Davis at Twinwood Farm — see page 55

Acknowledgements: Jean Paul Pallud would like to thank Mrs Monique Obled and Josef Charita, Jean Louis Roba and Peter Taghon for their assistance with his research on Hitler's tour of the Western Front, also René Mathot, author of *Au ravin du loup*, (Racine Publications, 2000), the best published account to date on this subject. All wartime pictures are from the US National Archives Collection of Seized Enemy Records. For help with the Bachenheimer story, the Editor and Frank van Lunteren would like to thank, in the Netherlands: Norbert de Groot and Father Gerard Thuring; and in the United States: Ethel Betry; James McNamara, Jr; and Fred Baldino.

During the early hours of Friday, May 10, Hitler moved to his advanced headquarters, code-named 'Felsennest', a secret installation established near Rodert, from where he followed the development of 'Plan Yellow' with Generaloberst Wilhelm Keitel, the chief of OKW, and Generalmajor Alfred Jodl, chief of OKW's Wehrmachtführungsstab. *Above:* **Hitler leaving the Lagebaracke, the camouflaged chalet where the situation conferences were held. For a week, Hitler remained at 'Felsennest' but on Friday, May 17, and again on the following Friday (24th), he left to visit the front, being flown to the headquarters of Heeresgruppe A to confer with Generaloberst von Rundstedt. Then on the weekend of June 1 and 2 he went on a major tour of the Western Front — part business, part pleasure — to visit the various army and corps commanders. Finally, after a whistle-stop tour of cultural sites in Paris on Sunday, June 23 (see *After the Battle* No. 14), he undertook a nostalgic two-day battlefield tour (June 25-26) in the company of two of his old comrades from the First World War. No precise written record was made of the routes taken or the locations visited so it has been a painstaking job to piece together each day's journey. Jean Paul's primary source has been 35mm photographs taken by Heinrich Hoffmann, Hitler's official photographer, and his assistants. Captured by the Americans at the end of the war, these negatives, still in uncut rolls, have been retained in the Collection of Seized Enemy Records held in the US National Archives. Some places could easily be recognised but to confirm the routes taken, Jean Paul drove all the roads in between. 'With the foul deeds committed by these men and the millions who had died in their camps ever present in my thoughts', writes Jean Paul, 'it was an uncomfortable experience to follow so closely in the footsteps of Hitler and his inner circle'.**

The signal 'Fall Gelb, 10.5.40, 5.35 Uhr' was despatched on the afternoon of Thursday, May 9, 1940 and that evening the codeword 'Danzig' was signalled to all units. 'Proceed with offensive'.

During the afternoon Hitler boarded his private train, the Führersonderzug 'Amerika', at the small station at Finkenkrug north of Berlin, allegedly for a trip to Schleswig-Holstein. The train set off at 5 p.m., heading north but then turned westwards to arrive in the early hours of May 10 at the station in Euskirchen west of Bonn where a detachment from the Führer-Begleit-Bataillon was waiting. Leaving the station around 5 a.m., Hitler was driven to the nearby Führerhauptquartier (Führer's Headquarters, officially abbreviated FHQu). Code-named 'Felsennest' (Rocky Nest), this secret installation had been established near Rodert, about one kilometre south of Bad-Münstereifel, as Hitler's headquarters for the attack on the Western Front (see *After the Battle* No. 19). The various High Commands followed Hitler westwards to reach their own advanced command posts dispersed in the proximity of the 'Felsennest'.

At 5.35 a.m. (German time) on Friday, May 10, German troops crossed the borders of the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg – the Blitzkrieg in the West had begun. For one week, while 'Plan Yellow' unrolled across western Europe, Hitler remained secluded in the 'Felsennest'. He followed the development of the attack in daily conferences with the advanced echelon of the Oberkommando der Wehrmacht (OKW), particularly with Generaloberst Wilhelm Keitel, the chief of OKW, and Generalmajor Alfred Jodl, chief of OKW's Wehrmachtführungsstab.

On the afternoon of May 11, Hitler went to confer with Generaloberst Walther von Brauchitsch, the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, whose advanced OKH headquarters was established at Forsthaus von Haniel, not far from the FHQu. The conference lasted for over two hours and General der Artillerie Franz Halder, the OKH Director of Operations, noted that the Führer was 'happy with the success but anticipated attacks from the south'.

Though he already displayed worries about the extended southern flank, Hitler was still fully confident in the Fall Gelb plan and on Tuesday, May 14, he issued his Directive No. 11 which laid down that available motorised divisions 'will be transferred as soon as possible to the operational area of Heeresgruppe A'.

HITLER ON THE WESTERN FRONT

By Jean Paul Pallud

Starting out from the 'Felsennest' FHQu at 1 p.m. on Friday, May 17, Hitler travelled the 15 kilometres to the airfield at Odendorf, north-east of Bad-Münstereifel, and was flown from there to Bastogne to confer with Generaloberst Gerd von Rundstedt, the commander of Heeresgruppe A. The conference started about 3 p.m. and von Rundstedt and his staff officers reported on the successful development of the attack. Hitler insisted that the southern flank be secured quickly but von Rundstedt argued that the initiative must be maintained. Hitler finally approved the order that Gruppe von Kleist should continue to push forward. Hitler and his party returned to 'Felsennest' by 6.15 p.m.

That evening General Halder wrote in his diary: 'A really unpleasant day. The Führer is terribly nervous. He's afraid of his own success and would rather not take risks and therefore prefers to halt us. The pretext is concern for the left flank. His orders, which were conveyed by Keitel in discussions with the army groups, and his own visit to Heeresgruppe A have simply caused uncertainty and doubt.'

With the Wehrmacht's rapid advance, Hitler was now pressing to relocate the Führerhauptquartier further west, nearer to the action. At 8 a.m. on Wednesday, May 22, Oberst Rudolf Schmundt, Hitler's OKW adjutant, Major Gerhard Engel, Hitler's army adjutant, and Oberstleutnant Kurt Thomas, the Kommandant FHQu (commander of the Führer's Headquarters), started out by air from Odendorf in company with Dr Fritz Todt, the Minister of Armaments and Munitions. They landed in Belgium at Philippeville, 20 kilometres south of Charleroi, and from there drove south in search for a suitable place to set up the new FHQu. They finally settled on Brûly-de-Pesche, a small wooded village between Rocroi in France and Couvin in Belgium. The lay-out of the installation was soon agreed and a code-name was chosen: 'Waldwiese' (Forest Meadow).

On Friday (May 24), in company with Generalmajor Jodl and Oberst Schmundt, Hitler flew from Odendorf to Charleville-Mézières just west of Sedan for another conference with Heeresgruppe A. He endorsed the decision taken the day before by von Rundstedt and about 12.45 a.m. the 'Halt-Befehl' was sent to the 4. Armee: 'By the Führer's order . . . the general line Lens-Béthune-Aire-St.Omer-Gravelines (canal line) will not be passed . . .'

Friday, May 17, Bastogne. A detachment of the Führer-Begleit-Bataillon under Oberleutnant Struck (comprising Hitler's six-wheeled Mercedes-Benz, four other six-wheelers for the escort and one reserve car) met Hitler's party at the airfield and drove him to the Heeresgruppe A HQ at No. 3 Avenue de la Gare.

By the time Hitler came for another conference, the HQ had moved to Charleville-Mézières. On Friday, May 24 a guard party from the Führer-Begleit-Bataillon under Hauptmann von Blomberg escorted Hitler from the aerodrome to von Rundstedt's HQ in Blairon House on Avenue Georges Corneau.

Left: **On Saturday, June 1, the first of the four aircraft carrying Hitler and his staff to Brussels landed at the airfield at Evere. With Hitler in this aircraft — a Focke Wulf FW 200 Condor numbered D-2600 — were SS-Gruppenführer Julius Schaub (personal adjutant), Oberst Rudolf Schmundt (OKW adjutant), Major Gerhard Engel (army adjutant), Hauptmann Nicolaus von Below (Luftwaffe adjutant), SS-Obersturmbannführer Dr Karl Brandt (physician), SS-Sturmbannführer Erich Kempka (chauffeur) and SS-Untersturmführer Heinz Linge (valet).** *Right:* **The Führer was greeted by Generaloberst Fedor von Bock, the commander of Heeresgruppe B. In the background stands Generaloberst Walther von Brauchitsch, the C-in-C Army.**

In the evening of Wednesday, May 29, just back at 'Felsennest' from Brûly-de-Pesche where they had surveyed the construction of 'Waldwiese', Thomas and Schmundt learned of Hitler's plan for a two-day visit to the army and corps commanders on Thursday and Friday. He was to fly to Brussels in the morning and an accommodation for the evening had to be prepared in the Lille-Armentières area. At 10 p.m., one detachment of the Führer-Begleit-Bataillon under Hauptmann Nähring was despatched so that it would already be in place next morning at Evere, Brussels airport. Under Hauptmann von Blomberg, another detachment was ordered to take up station at the southern entrance of Tournai.

At 8 a.m. on May 30, the first aircraft took off from Odendorf with Oberstleutnant Thomas on board. On arrival at Brussels-Evere, he met the commanders of the Führer-Begleit-Bataillon troops — Flak, security and communications — that he had sent on ahead, but at 9.15 a.m. a phone call from the FHQu informed him that the Führer's tour had been postponed.

On receiving the news, Thomas went to Tournai to see Hauptmann von Blomberg, who had reached the sector with his detachment as planned, and then journeyed southwards to Lille to discuss the situation in that sector with the commander of the 253. Infanterie-Division, Generalleutnant Fritz Kühne. From him he learned that fighting was still taking place in the south-western part of the city.

Kühne's HQ had been established in the Château de Brigode at Annapes, six kilometres east of Lille, and as he was scheduled to move out with his staff next morning, Thomas thought that the château would be an ideal base for the Führer for the night he was planning to spend in the sector. During the afternoon, Thomas went on to reconnoitre other possibilites in the Lesquin and Seclin areas but he could not find anything better. He returned to 'Felsennest' that evening and, following a discussion with Schmundt, the selection of the Château de Brigode was confirmed. At 11 p.m. Thomas sent Oberleutnant Ebering and another detachment to occupy the château immediately and discreetly.

At 8.30 a.m. on Friday (May 31), Thomas took off from Odendorf for Evere. There he gave new orders to the commanders of the Führer-Begleit-Bataillon troops waiting for the Führer before flying on to Valenciennes at 9.45 a.m. The landing strip there was still obstructed by farm machinery spread across it by the French to prevent the use of the airfield but, nevertheless, they succeeded in getting down safely. Thomas met with von Blomberg and ordered him to reconnoitre the roads from the Bissegem airfield, just west of Courtrai, eastwards and westwards, and southwards to Annapes.

Driving via Saint-Amand, Thomas arrived at Annapes at 11.30 a.m. The staff of 253. Infanterie-Division had already departed

The party leaves the control tower. From L-R: Generaloberst Keitel, Hitler, Generaloberst von Bock, General Georg von Küchler (commanding 18. Armee) and General Albert Kesselring (commanding Luftflotte 2).

The building is now occupied by the logistics division of the Belgian Air Force and Karel Margry had to undertake a lengthy negotiation at the gate and get special press clearance before being allowed to take this comparison.

Entering Brussels from the east, the motorcade arrives at the Cinquantenaire Arch, a monument built to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the founding of Belgium in 1831. From the war diary of the FHQu Kommandantur, we know the composition of the Führer-Begleit-Bataillon convoy which toured Brussels on June 1. The first echelon comprised five motor cars, including one for Hitler, another for Keitel, one containing the ADCs, and two with security guards. The second echelon formed the motorcycle platoon under Oberleutnant Bock, the Flak platoon under Oberleutnant Rossmann, with one vehicle in reserve. Following in the third echelon under Oberleutnant Neumann were the communications team, an armoured car for reconnaissance, the field kitchen, and a vehicle carrying supplies and luggage.

and Oberleutnant Ebering was in charge. Thomas allocated rooms for the expected visitors and sent Hauptmann Nähring to reconnoitre the Annapes-Menin and the Menin-Ypres roads, and at 8 p.m. he flew back to 'Felsennest' to confer with Schmundt and map out the details of Hitler's two-day tour.

At 10 a.m. on Saturday, June 1, Hitler and his entourage left FHQu 'Felsennest' for the airfield at Odendorf bound for Brussels-Evere and took off some 20 minutes later. When they landed at about 11 a.m. they were greeted by Generaloberst Fedor von Bock commanding Heeresgruppe B. The army group's two subordinate commanders were also there, Generaloberst Walter von Reichenau of the 6. Armee and General der Artillerie Georg von Küchler of the 18. Armee, as was the C-in-C Army, Generaloberst Walther von Brauchitsch, and the commander of the Luftflotte 2, General der Flieger Albert Kesselring.

Von Bock noted: 'I summarise the situation, development and present state of play at Dunkirk. The Führer thanks us and develops his ideas about the overall war situation and the new operation. He announces the imminent entry of Italy into the war. He is concerned about Paris from where he is expecting French counter-attacks. Afterwards the Führer drives through the city with me; only a few people recognise him and they point at him excitedly. He knows more about Brussels than I do, presumably this is from the Great War.'

Having driven along Rue de la Loi and past the Palais de Justice, the convoy turned into Rue de la Régence towards the Place Royale. This picture was taken just as the car was about to reach Place du Petit Sablon. The Synagogue stands on the left (the tower-like building) with the Palais de Justice in the background. These vehicles are part of the first echelon and it appears that the photographer was riding with the security guards as an MG34 can be seen at the ready.

After exposing ten more frames, the party reached the Grand Place which is the main square in Brussels. This shot was taken on the western side as Hitler's car was about to drive into Rue du Marché au Charbon.

Nothing has changed in the historical centre of Brussels, always a popular tourist destination although this group of British schoolchildren appear to be undecided as to their next port of call!

Left: **Instead of driving directly to Ghent, Hitler's motorcade made a detour north to have a look at the bridges blown by the Belgians over the Willebroek canal. There had been a battle at Kapelle-op-den-Bos on May 17 when the Belgians sent two of their ACG 1 light tanks to cover the demolished bridges and try to stop the Germans from crossing the canal.** *Right:* **The canal was widened in the 1950s and road and rail bridges now cross the canal together at the same spot.**

Left: **At Ghent there was a conference with General von Küchler, the 18. Armee commander, followed by a midday meal from a field kitchen. The convoy then crossed the city, heading for Courtrai.** *Right:* **However this photo taken on Limburgstraat contrasts the description of the Flanders' tour given by SS-Untersturmführer Linge, Hitler's valet: 'Men, women and children stood along the streets. A few made a friendly impression and shouted "Heil Hitler". There were garlands everywhere. Flowers adorned the houses. There were pictures of Hitler in the windows. I was surprised by this unusual reception . . .'**

The Führer-Begleit-Bataillon convoy comprising five motor cars for the personalities, an armoured car for reconnaissance, a motorcycle platoon, Flak platoon, communications team, a press car and a field kitchen, then set out from the airfield. They crossed the centre of Brussels on a generally east to west route before heading north to Kapelle-op-den-Bos. Motoring via Alost, they reached Ghent for a conference with General der Artillerie von Küchler commanding 18. Armee and then partook of a midday meal from the field kitchen. The Führer's party then started out for Courtrai. Though there is neither any indication in the FHQu Kommandantur war diary, nor any photograph to support this supposition, I think that it might have been at this point that a diversion was made to enable Hitler to visit the farm at Ardooie where he had been in July 1917. Of this visit, SS-Untersturmführer Heinz Linge, Hitler's valet, later recalled: 'Curious inhabitants stood around our car when Hitler got out, looked around him, and walked alone to the farm of farmer Joseph Goethals at Markt 18. There he had been billeted 23 years ago. His former host and hostess stood in the door. Hitler talked to them but nobody could hear what was said. Hitler, who did not need an interpreter, returned looking serious.'

While Hitler and his generals were absorbed in yet another conference — this time with Generaloberst von Reichenau, the 6. Armee commander, and his staff at Bissegem airfield — their aides were able to relax outside. *Left:* **Heinrich Hoffmann in conversation with some SS men.** *Right:* **The old Armée de l'Air barracks have since been demolished and Bissegem is now a civilian airfield used by a flying club and small business aircraft. Peter Taghon took the comparison for us.**

At Ypres Hitler wanted to visit the Menin Gate which had been inaugurated in 1927 as a British Memorial to the Missing. This great archway bears the names of nearly 55,000 men of the armies of the British Empire who died between 1914 and August 15, 1917 and have no known grave. At Ypres, Hitler was retracing his own footsteps for he had received his baptism of fire near Geluveld on October 29, 1914, in the first Ypres battle. He then served with the Bayerisches Infanterie-Regiment 16. The first Ypres battle raged until mid-November when the Germans finally ceased their attacks with the onset of bad weather. In December, Infanterie-Regiment 16 fought in the Messines-Wijtschate sector when Hitler was awarded the Iron Cross Second Class. His regiment fought on this part of the front throughout 1915 until it was moved to another sector in 1916. It returned to Ypres in September 1918 and on October 13 Hitler was blinded in a gas attack on the high ground of La Montagne, two kilometres south of Wervik. He was first taken to the hospital at Oudenaarde before being transferred on October 21 to the Pasewalk Hospital (west of Stettin). He was still a patient there when the war ended on November 11,

The party resumed their journey and soon arrived at Bissegem airfield, just west of Courtrai, where Hitler conferred with Generaloberst von Reichenau, commanding 6. Armee. Continuing via Wevelgem and Menin, the convoy reached Ypres where they halted in front of the Menin Gate. After spending around ten minutes inspecting the Memorial to the Missing the motorcade resumed its course and crossed the city of Ypres. They then visited Langemark where Hitler met with General der Infanterie Viktor von Schwedler, commanding IV. Armeekorps, and looked at the huge First World War German war cemetery there.

The return trip started via Boezinge and Poperinge, in the direction of Kemmel where the party pulled up at the Belvédère Café on Mount Kemmel. After a survey of the area from this viewpoint, the tour ended via Wijtschate and Wervik, crossing the sector where Hitler had fought in the First World War. The bridge at Comines had been blown so they diverted to cross the Lys at Wervik before heading southwards through Tourcoing. At 7.20 p.m., having toured the centre of Lille where Hitler had been in October 1914, the convoy arrived at the Château de Brigode. Later that evening Thomas and his officers held a conference to sort out the details for the following day and Oberleutnant Ebering was sent on ahead to Cambrai to set up the field kitchen at the aerodrome.

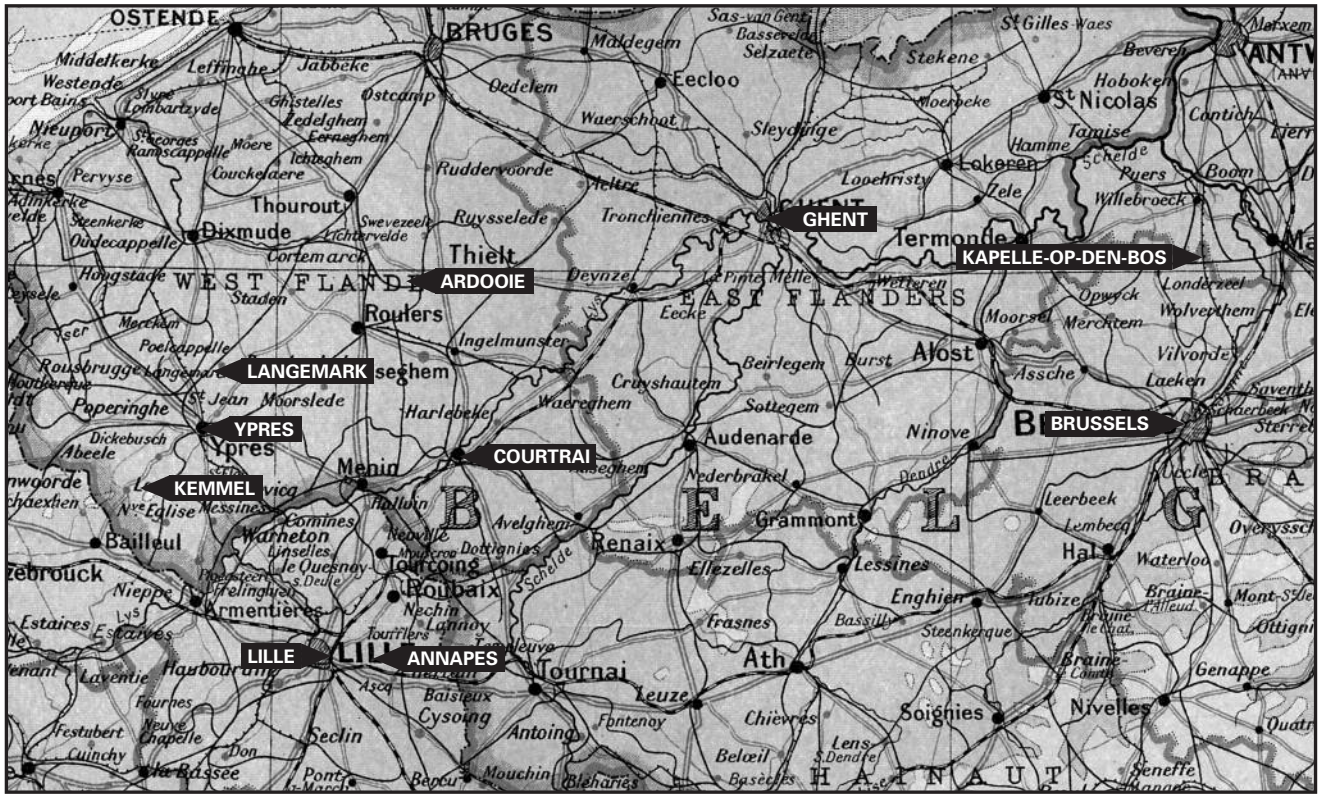
Left: **The convoy then crossed Ypres on its way to Langemark, ten kilometres to the north. Here they pass the partly-rebuilt Cloth Hall. This great building had been destroyed in 1915 during month-long German artillery barrages.** *Above:* **Although restoration began in 1920, it would take another 40 years before the work was completed, King Baudouin finally unveiling a commemorative tablet in 1967.**

Left: **The Germans suffered crushing losses in the first battle of Ypres in October 1914 with some 1,500 dead being counted in the Langemark area alone. Over 44,000 now lie in the huge German Soldatenfriedhof which incorporates a mass grave containing 25,000.** *Right:* **Mature trees have greatly altered the appearance of this northern part of the cemetery.**

'Der Führer ehrte die toten Helden der deutschen Jugend aus dem Weltkrieg' was the original caption of this picture by Heinrich Hoffmann. 'The Führer paid homage to the dead heroes of the German youth of the World War.'

Left: **After paying his respects, Hitler emerges from the cemetery followed by General von Schwedler.** *Right:* **The red stone entrance remains exactly as it was in June 1940 but the heavy iron gate was closed when we took this comparison.**

The Führer's party then stopped for a visit to Mount Kemmel, a strategic hill that had been taken by the Germans in April 1918. *Left:* In front of the Belvédère Café, General von Schwedler points out significant features of the WWI battlefield. *Right:* The café has been rebuilt on the site of the old one destroyed in the fighting of 1918. 'One can now survey the countryside while taking a coffee', says Jean Paul, 'the beauty of the view and the peacefulness of the place, with empty seats and tables, assuaging the discomfort that I initially felt following in the footsteps of these infamous "tourists".'



While Hitler observes and discusses the battlefield with his party, the security troops relax by the transport. In the foreground, a Kfz 70 mounting a 20mm Flak 30.

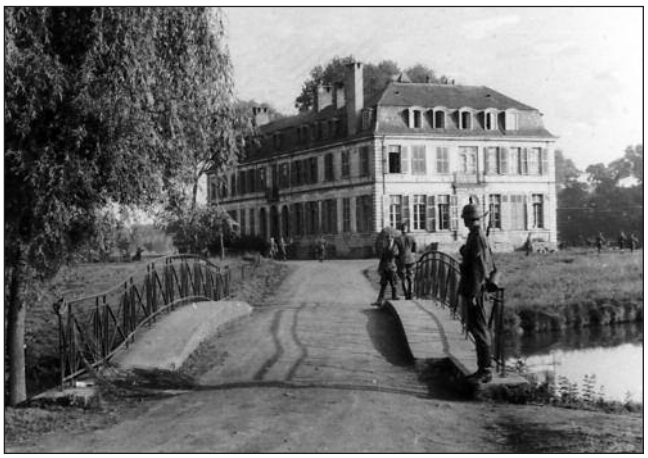
The Belvédère Café has been enlarged since 1940 but the observation tower, to the right of the building, remains unchanged though it is now covered with ivy.

On the evening of Saturday, June 1, instead of driving directly to the Château de Brigode where he was to spend the night, Hitler choose instead to backtrack and tour the centre of Lille where he had been billeted in October 1914. Jean Paul: 'Studying the exposures of Hoffmann Roll 5045, frame by frame, I followed the route of the convoy as it proceeded along Place du Théâtre, Rue Faidherbe, Place de la Gare, Rue de Tournai . . .' *Left:* A few townspeople and some German soldiers gathered in front of the railway station were surprised as Hitler passed them by. *Right:* 'The Lille Flandres railway station still looks exactly as it did in 1940', says Jean Paul, 'although more space has now been devoted to pedestrians and less for driving cars. Hitler returned to Lille again on the morning of June 2, en route to Pont-à-Marck, when more pictures were taken, including ones showing abandoned French vehicles on Boulevard de la Liberté and Boulevard Jean-Baptiste Lebas.'

The convoy arrived at the Château de Brigode at 7.20 p.m. where the party was to be quartered for the night. Here, together with Generaloberst Keitel, chief of OKW, SS-Gruppenführer Schaub, his personal adjutant, and Generalleutnant Karl Bodenschatz, Göring's envoy to the FHQu, Hitler takes a breath of fresh air.

Sunday, June 2. Having been woken at 7.30 a.m. and taken breakfast at eight, the party left the château half an hour later. They crossed the urban area of Lille to reach Pont-à-Marck were Hitler had a brief meeting with Generaloberst Günther von Kluge commanding 4. Armee. They then drove on to Avelin where they conferred with General der Infanterie Adolf Strauss, the commander of the II. Armeekorps. Motoring via Seclin, Carvin and Lens, the party arrived at Vimy where they visited the Canadian Memorial Park. At the base of the twin pillars of the memorial, General der Infanterie Hermann Hoth of the V. Armeekorps had set up maps detailing the crossing of the Meuse river at Dinant and the tank battle near Cambrai. Hitler then said to Generalmajor Erwin Rommel, the commander of the 7. Panzer-Division: "Rommel, we were very worried about you during the attack" (see *Blitzkrieg in the West Then and Now*). Behind the audience, covered with wooden shuttering put up by the French to protect it from being damaged in the fighting, stood the figure of 'Canada in Mourning' (see centre pages).

Mixing business with pleasure, the party resumed its tour via Neuville, Souchez and Notre-Dame de Lorette, where they visited the French Memorial and cemetery, before passing through Arras and Douai to reach Bouchain to receive a report from General der Artillerie Walter Heitz of the VIII. Armeekorps.

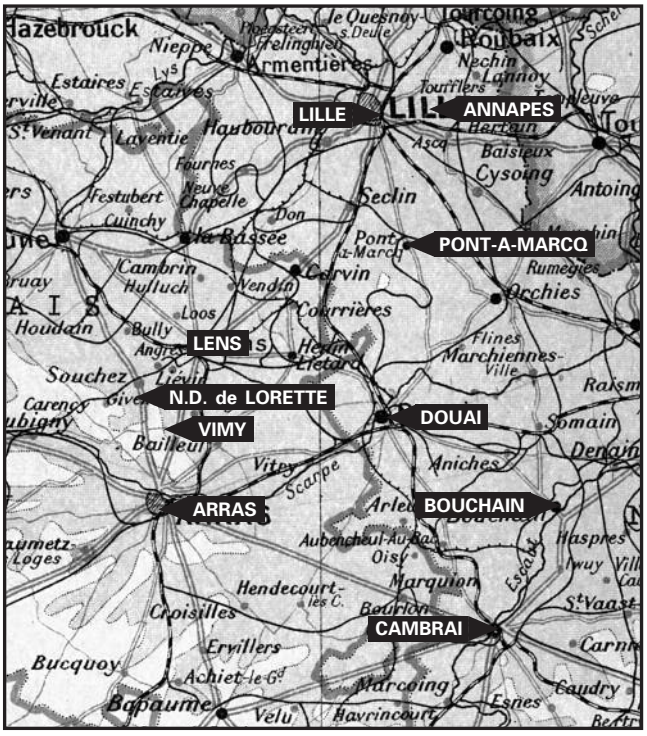


After having stood since 1770, the Château de Brigode was unceremoniously demolished in 1969 and a golf course and housing estate built over the former parkland. Only the outbuildings (off to the left in this picture) remain, now converted into the club-house. *Right:* Though it has been modified, this small bridge, which now leads down to the course, has also survived.

Sunday morning at Vimy. With General Hoth having completed his lecture, the visitors return to their cars. Hitler leads with Generaloberst Keitel on his right and Generaloberst von Kluge on his left. Behind, from left to right, we can see Göring's envoy, Generalleutnant Bodenschatz, and Reichsleiter Dr Otto Dietrich, the Reich press chief, with Generalmajor Jodl between Keitel and Hitler and SS-Gruppenführer Schaub, the personal adjutant, between Hitler and von Kluge.

Before leaving the Canadian Memorial Park, Hitler stopped to walk over that part of the old front line which had been preserved just as it had been left in 1918, complete with trenches and craters. The party then set off for the French Memorial and Cemetery at Notre-Dame de Lorette, Hitler sitting beside his chauffeur, SS-Sturmbannführer Kempka.

Having alighted at the entrance to the French Memorial, Hitler and his retinue walk up to the chapel. There are 20,000 graves in the Notre-Dame de Lorette cemetery with the bones of another 20,000 unknown in the ossuary. *Left:* **The impact of a stray shell was visible in the stonework on the corner of the chapel but no trace remains of the damage today** *(right)*.



At the top of this 50-metre-high tower, a searchlight shines all night, rotating 360 degrees. Behind Keitel, Hitler and von Kluge we can see, from left to right, Reichsleiter Dr Otto Dietrich (between Keitel and Hitler), SS-Gruppenführer Schaub (between Hitler and von Kluge), Reichsleiter Martin Bormann and SS-Obersturmbannführer Dr Brandt (the tall figure behind Bormann).

The visit completed, the party cross in front of the chapel to return to the vehicles. In the front row, von Kluge, Hitler, Bormann and Schaub.

The stone which appears in the pictures at the top of this page is the same one that is visible on the corner to the left of the entrance.

Arras. Since the Romans established a legion here, the town has been the focal point of many wars. By 863, it was part of Flanders, then the Normans sacked it. In the centuries thereafter, the French, the English, the Austrians and the Spanish held sway for varying periods. In 1541 the English and the Spaniards fought the French for the city and between 1633 and 1707, a strong citadel was built on designs by Vauban. In 1914 the Germans occupied the city from September 18 but the French soon forced them to retire. After a heavy bombardment by German artillery in October 1914, the Hôtel de Ville caught fire, the belfry collapsing on the 21st. For months thereafter, battles were fought for the city which was completely ruined by more German artillery shelling and air raids. *Left:* **By the time Hitler visited Arras in June 1940, the beautiful Hôtel de Ville on the Place des Héros had been rebuilt in the original style of the 15th and 16th Centuries.**

Left: **Hitler's motorcade turned left in front of the railway station, heading north-eastwards in the direction of Douai. Whether German troops had been warned in advance of the Führer's visit we do not know but many were out on the street to cheer him as he passed by.** *Right:* **Peaceful day in Arras in 2002. The massive station has been replaced by this functional, if less ornate, building but the same houses still stand in the left background.**

Left: **After reaching Douai, the convoy continued eastwards in the direction of Bouchain where they were to meet with General der Artillerie Heitz, the commander of VIII. Armeekorps. Jean Paul: 'I found that this picture had been taken at the level crossing at Sin-le-Noble about two kilometres east of Douai. As can be seen in the picture, the Germans had not evacuated people along the roads followed by the convoy (unlike some of the other places where Hitler was to stop for a walkabout — see Bouchain overleaf). Nevertheless, guards were posted at cross-roads and other spots considered vulnerable.'** *Right:* **A flyover now takes the N45 over the railway line but a near-perfect comparison is still possible underneath while juggling with the concrete supports, the dark shadows . . . and approaching trains!**

Left: **By 1 p.m. the motorcade reached Bouchain where the crossings of the Escaut river had been hotly contested just a few days previously. General Heitz was waiting for them at the end of the pioneer bridge built some distance from the one blown by the French. The cars pulled up by the side of the road and Hitler and Heitz started out on foot along the Rue d'Ostrevant, the whole party following on behind.** *Right:* **The French had held out for six days in May 1940 and this part of the town near the bridge suffered badly. Today every house has been totally reconstructed.**

Left: **Just as Hoth had done at Vimy, General Heitz chose an excellent vantage point — the very top of the 12th century Ostrevant tower — to outline the battle to Hitler. Two maps detailing the corps advance had been set up on wooden board. Heitz described the fighting at Bouchain and explained how the French defenders from the 43ème Régiment d'Infanterie had blown all the bridges as the German leading elements approached on the morning of May 20. The French held their ground along the river delaying the 8. Infanterie-Division for six days during which time Bouchain had been pounded by German artillery. The river was successfully crossed on the morning of May 26, the French surrendering that afternoon. From L-R: Hitler, General Heitz, Generaloberst Keitel, Generalleutnant Bodenschatz and Generaloberst von Kluge. From October 1939 to May 11, 1940 when the corps advanced into Belgium as part of Plan Dyle, Général Benoit de la Laurencie, the commander of the IIIème Corps d'Armée had had his command post in the Ostrevant tower (see *Blitzkrieg in the West Then and Now*).** *Right:* **'The tower is now open to the public but it was due to Mrs Monique Obled of the local museum that I was given the opportunity to climb up to the very top of the tower to take this perfect comparison.'**

The conference completed, this picture shows the group walking back along Rue d'Ostrevant to return to the bridge near which their cars were parked. It was taken from the top of the rampart along the bank of the river. For this particular visit all the inhabitants had been cleared from the town. Not a single person remained in Bouchain on the morning of that Sunday,

German troops having earlier assembled all the civilians on the street. They then searched every house, pulling out anyone remaining, before marching the column — over 100 people in total — to the nearby Boucheneuil farm. Those who were too old to walk that far were permitted to stay in doors with all shutters closed under armed guard.

From Bouchain, the Führer's cavalcade moved out southwards on their way to the airfield at Niergnies which lay just beyond Cambrai. As the convoy passed through the town, Hitler stood like a Roman conquerer in his chariot to acknowledge the cheers from his troops lining Place Aristide Briand, now having more mundane use as an off-street car park.

Although the airfield still remains at Niergnies, sadly none of the old buildings have survived. However, a local air enthusiast, Michel Cahiez, provided us with photos taken at the aerodrome in the 1930s and these show the same control tower (in the left background) confirming that the ones of Hitler were also taken there. The actual spot is now an empty field.

The convoy then crossed Cambrai to reach Niergnies airfield just south of the city. General der Kavallerie Ewald von Kleist, commanding Gruppe von Kleist, was there to meet them and discuss the current situation before everyone had a midday meal together from the field kitchen.

The Führer's party took off at 3 p.m. for Charleville, over 100 kilometres to the east, where the headquarters of Heeresgruppe A was still located. Von Rundstedt had summoned all his army commanders to the conference: General der Kavallerie Maximilian von Weichs (2. Armee), Generaloberst Günther von Kluge (4. Armee), General der Infanterie Adolf Strauss (9. Armee), Generaloberst Wilhelm List (12. Armee) and General der Infanterie Ernst Busch (16. Armee), all with their Chiefs-of-Staff. Also present was Generaloberst Wilhelm von Leeb, the commander of Heeresgruppe C on the left wing further to the south, with his Chief-of-Staff. Hitler arrived at 4 p.m. and the conference lasted about an hour after which the party returned to the airfield. They flew back to Odendorf and by 6.30 p.m. were safely back at 'Felsennest'.

As planned, the Führerhauptquartier was moved westwards to Brûly-de-Pesche on

Niergnies. At 2.50 p.m. Hitler boarded his Focke Wulf FW 200 Condor which was to take him to Charleville for another conference with von Rundstedt.

On Thursday, June 6, the FHQu moved to Brûly-de-Pesche for which Hitler chose the code-name 'Wolfsschlucht' (Wolf's Lair). It comprised a concrete bunker and three wooden chalets, while the church, the presbytery, the school and the local village inn were turned into offices. (See also *After the Battle* No. 19.) *Left:* **Having moved his private train the previous day to a tunnel at Yvoir, Generalfeldmarschall Göring is pictured visiting Hitler's new HQ.** *Right:* **Wolfsschlucht lives again. Since the war, two of the chalets have been rebuilt on the original locations beside the bunker which was never demolished.**

Thursday, June 6. Thomas had scheduled the move by air in three phases. The first echelon comprising FHQu personnel was to take off from Odendorf from 8 a.m.; the second, with Hitler and his entourage, by midday, and the third with all the luggage and the last of the personnel at 2 p.m.

Hitler's party left 'Felsennest' at 11.15 a.m. where they boarded the three aircraft of the second echelon waiting for them at the airfield. Thomas was on hand personally to meet Hitler on arrival at Gros-Caillou, 15 kilometres to the south of Brûly-de-Pesche, and he led him to the FHQu where they arrived at 1.30 p.m. (While the airfield was in France, the HQ lay over the frontier in Belgium.) Hitler promptly changed the code-name of his new Führerhauptquartier from 'Waldwiese' to 'Wolfsschlucht' (Wolf's Glen).

About 3 p.m., von Brauchitsch arrived to confer with Hitler (the OKH advanced headquarters had been moved to Forges, near Chimay, 15 kilometres north-west of 'Wolfsschlucht', on June 3). Two days later, von Brauchitsch returned to 'Wolfsschlucht' for a further meeting with Hitler after which the Führer issued his Directive No. 14 confirming the attack south-westwards by Heeresgruppe A.

During this period Hitler left 'Wolfsschlucht' twice to visit the Château de Lauesprelle, at Acoz, just south of Charleroi. He met Karl von Wiegand, an American journalist, there on the 9th, and on the 16th conferred with General Juan Vigon, Generalissimo Franco's envoy.

Hitler's entourage at the FHQu. Front row: Reichsleiter Dr Dietrich, Reich press chief; Keitel; Hitler; Jodl; Bormann; Hauptmann von Below; Heinrich Hoffmann. Middle row: SA-Obergruppenführer Wilhelm Brückner, chief personal adjutant; Generalleutnant Bodenschatz; Oberst Schmundt; SS-Gruppenführer Karl Wolff, Himmler's envoy to the FHQu; Dr Theodor Morell, chief physician; SS-Obersturmführer Hans-Georg Schulze, ordnance officer. Back row: Major Engel; Dr Brandt; Fregattenkapitän Karl-Jesko von Puttkamer, Kriegsmarine adjutant; Oberbannführer Heinz Lorenz, Dr Dietrich's deputy; Legationsrat Walther Hewel, von Ribbentrop's envoy to the FHQu; unknown; SS-Gruppenführer Julius Schaub, and SS-Hauptsturmführer Max Wünsche, ordnance officer.

On Sunday, June 9, Hitler went by road via Couvin and Philippeville to the Château de Lauesprelle at Acoz to hold an interview with an American journalist, Karl von Wiegand, the chief representative of the Hearst Press in Europe (this interview was published in America on June 14). In the afternoon of the following Sunday (June 16), Hitler returned by car to the Château de Lauesprelle where, in concert with Joachim von Ribbentrop, he met with General Juan Vigon, Franco's envoy. *Left:* **Watched by Walther Hewel, von Ribbentrop's envoy at the FHQu, Hitler has a final word with his Foreign Minister.** *Right:* **Hewel salutes the Spanish general from the top of the stairs as Vigon departs.**

Left: **On his way to Rethondes near Compiègne, where the armistice was to be signed with the French, Hitler made a brief halt in Laon. On the Rue de la Herse, in front of the cathedral, he was pictured in conversation with Reichsminister Dr Hans Lammers, head of the Reich Chancellery, Rudolf Hess, the Deputy Führer, and Reichsleiter Dr Otto Dietrich, the Reich press chief.** *Right:* **A café has since been opened on this corner of the square which is normally packed with tourists who would no doubt have been surprised to learn that Hitler had also once stopped here.**

In the early morning of Monday, June 17, the French made an overture through Spanish channels for terms for an Armistice. The Foreign Office in Berlin immediately relayed the request to Walther Hewel, the office envoy at the FHQu, and around 10 a.m. he joyfully informed Hitler. Momentarily ecstatic upon hearing the news the Führer raised his right leg and stamped his foot sharply in what has become known as 'Hitler's Jig'. Hitler had already decided that negotiations with the French would be held at Rethondes, near Compiègne, where the German delegation had been brought in November 1918 to discuss their Armistice. To reconnoitre the site and prepare for the ceremony, Oberstleutnant Thomas was despatched to Rethondes that afternoon.

Meanwhile Hitler and Mussolini had to confer to agree their respective positions so that France could not play one against the other in the coming negotiations. At 6.45 p.m., Hitler left 'Wolfsschlucht' for the Gros-Caillou airfield from where he flew to Frankfurt where his Foreign Minister, Joachim von Ribbentrop, was waiting for him. After a short update, they both boarded Hitler's private train 'Amerika' bound for Munich where they arrived at midday on Tuesday, June 18. In the afternoon Hitler met with Mussolini in the Führerbau, each leader being accompanied by their respective Foreign Ministers, von Ribbentrop and Galeazzo Ciano, and members of the High Command, among whom were Generaloberst Wilhelm Keitel and Generale Mario Roatta.

Back in France, two platoons of the Führer-Begleit-Bataillon under Hauptmann Bertram had been detailed to go to Rethondes with orders to carry out special preparations for the ceremony. The railway carriage in which the 1918 Armistice had been signed was to be set up in the centre of the clearing on the exact spot where it had stood in 1918. To achieve this, the end wall of the museum where the carriage was preserved was to be demolished and the carriage pulled out on tracks laid to the centre of the clearing, and Oberstleutnant Thomas went to Rethondes on Wednesday (June 19) to inspect the progress. Meanwhile Hitler arrived back at 'Wolfsschlucht' from Munich at 2.15 p.m.

At 8 a.m. on Friday, June 21, the first Junkers Ju 52 took off from Gros-Caillou to transport members of the press to Rethondes. More aircraft followed during the morning, one with Oberstleutnant Thomas, another with Keitel, Jodl and their ADCs.

Hitler left 'Wolfsschlucht' at 11.30 a.m. preferring to motor the 150 kilometres to Compiègne. On his way, he found the time to stop at Laon and also at Urcel, ten kilometres to the south-west. He arrived at Rethondes at 3.15 p.m.

Hitler made another stop at Urcel, ten kilometres to the south-west of Laon, to examine a destroyed Renault B1bis tank of the 4ème D.C.R., de Gaulle's armoured division. From L-R: SS-Obersturmführer Hans Pfeiffer, ordnance officer, Reichsminister Dr Hans Lammers, Reichsführer SS Heinrich Himmler, Hitler and, in the background, Reichsleiter Dr Dietrich. Hitler had stayed in Urcel in March 1918.

It would appear from the photographic evidence that Himmler and Lammers had travelled together from 'Wolfsschlucht' and, contrary to what has always been written, it was while Hitler was on his way *to* Rethondes that he had stopped at Laon and Urcel, not on the return journey. The analysis of Hoffmann's negatives (film rolls 5070 and 5072) clearly proves this point.

Arriving at Rethondes, Hitler alighted from his car and saluted the other members of the German delegation who were waiting for him. From L-R: Rudolf Hess, Joachim von Ribbentrop, Admiral Raeder (shaking hands with Hitler), Generalfeldmarschall Göring and Generaloberst von Brauchitsch. In the background the Alsace-Lorraine statue has been draped with German flags to cover the stone image of the German eagle being stabbed by the Allied golden sword.

Having joined Generalfeldmarschall Hermann Göring (C-in-C Luftwaffe), Admiral Karl Raeder (C-in-C Kriegsmarine), Generaloberst Wilhelm Keitel (chief of OKW), Generaloberst Walther von Brauchitsch (C-in-C Army), Joachim von Ribbentrop (Foreign Minister) and Rudolf Hess (Deputy Führer), he strode past the troops lining the avenue to the clearing where the Armistice coach was positioned. They approached the large French memorial and paused for a moment to read the triumphant words engraved in French: 'Here on the eleventh of November 1918 perished the criminal ambition of the German Empire, vanquished by the free peoples which it tried to enslave'. (The granite slab was subsequently destroyed on his orders, see *After the Battle* No. 80, pages 8-9.)

At 3.30 p.m. the German delegation entered the railway carriage, Hitler sitting himself in the same chair occupied by Maréchal Ferdinand Foch in 1918. The French delegation entered the carriage ten minutes later. Hitler said nothing. Both delegations listened to a statement read by Keitel which blamed the Allies not only for the war of 1940 but also for the wrongdoings of 1914 but gave the French Army credit for its heroic resistance. As soon as this preamble had been read – it was now about 4 p.m. – Hitler and his entourage got up and left leaving Keitel in charge of the actual negotiations. Hitler arrived back at 'Wolfsschlucht' at 8 p.m. (The Armistice was finally signed on Saturday evening.)

Although there is no clue in the war diary of the FHQu Kommandantur to establish Hitler's precise return route from Rethondes, most probably it was fairly direct via Laon and Rozoy-sur-Serre, yet one sequence on Roll 5106 shows some of the FHQu party journeying via Saint-Quentin. *Left and right:* **A deserted Place de l'Hôtel de Ville in Saint-Quentin . . . then and now. Contrary to what has been written, Hitler did not visit Soissons cathedral on June 21. His convoy certainly crossed the city that day on its way to Rethondes but there is no photographic evidence to indicate that he stopped there. Also, although it has been said that he visited the cathedrals at Laon and Reims on that same June 21, he did not for the photos clearly show Amann and Schmied accompanying him so this visit could only have occurred on June 25. Finally, there are no photos to prove that Hitler returned by air from Reims on June 21 as has been suggested previously.**

Hitler does not appear on these shots from Roll 5106 so it is possible that it was only one detachment of the FHQu troops (Hauptmann Bertram?) that returned via this northern route. *Left:* **This picture was taken at the Bellevue crossroads between Hirson and Rocroi. From here 'Wolfsschlucht' is still some 30 kilometres away.** *Right:* **Bellevue crossroads, June 2001.**

Two architects, Albert Speer and Hermann Giesler, and the sculptor Arno Breker accompanied Hitler for his long-awaited visit to Paris. Also present on this lightning tour were some of his normal entourage like Keitel, Brückner, Schaub, Dietrich, Bodenschatz, Schmundt and Engel. *Left:* **The second stop of the tour was at the church of La Madeleine.** *Right:* **On the other side of the Seine river, another halt at Les Invalides to contemplate the tomb of Napoleon.**

Though the Armistice was not to come into force until further negotiations had taken place in Italy (the French delegation left Paris for Rome on board three German transport aircraft on Sunday morning, June 23), Hitler decided that he could not delay any longer to make a long-awaited cultural visit to Paris. The French capital had fascinated him since his early years and he had spent much time studying maps and plans of the city. In the event, he chose to be accompanied by three artists: architects Albert Speer and Hermann Giesler and sculptor Arno Breker who were familiar with the architectural history of Paris and had prepared a route to take in all the important buildings (see *After the Battle* No. 14).

The party took off from Gros-Caillou at 3.30 a.m. on Sunday morning and landed at Le Bourget airfield an hour later, while it was still dark. They boarded the waiting vehicles and, escorted by a small Führer-Begleit-Bataillon detachment, the ten-car convoy moved off, reaching Paris at dawn.

The tour began at l'Opéra where Théodore Pierre, a surprised attendant, guided the small group through the empty building. He was businesslike but reserved and he refused the 50-Mark note that Hitler told Brückner to offer as they left. It is said that M. Pierre did not recognise Hitler and it was only later in the morning that he was told the identity of his early visitor.

The convoy then drove to the church of La Madeleine, the classical form of which impressed Hitler, before they continued via the Place de la Concorde, up the Champs Elysées and around the Arc de Triomphe. Reaching the Place du Trocadéro, Hitler ordered another stop and he posed in the well-known picture with Speer and Breker with their backs to the Eifel Tower. They then crossed the Seine via the Pont d'Iena, past the Eifel Tower, making for Les Invalides. The party entered the building and Hitler stood for a long time in silence contemplating the tomb of Napoleon.

They next visited the Panthéon where Hitler admired the dimensions although he later recalled that he found its interior a disappointment. The whistle-stop tour then took in Sainte Chapelle, the Hôtel de Ville, Place des Vosges, the Louvre, Rue de Rivoli and Montmartre where they stopped for some time to have a last look at the city basking in radiant sunshine. It was then about 8 a.m. and the party quickly returned to Le Bourget.

They took off an hour later and Hitler asked his pilot, Hans Baur, to circle several times over Paris while Hoffmann took some pictures. They then returned to Gros-Caillou and by 10.30 a.m. the party was back at 'Wolfsschlucht'.

The convoy crossed the Place de l'Etoile, turning around the Arc de Triomphe. From his studies of plans of the city, Hitler knew Paris quite well and he claimed that he would be able to find his way about the streets and monuments without a guide. For more pictures of his tour in Paris see *After the Battle* No. 14.

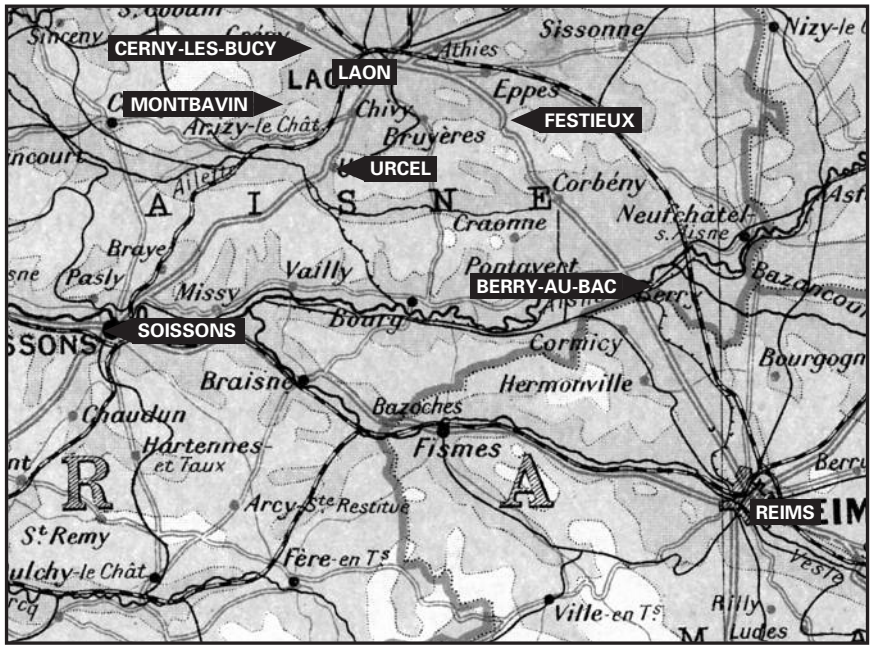
With Max Amann and Ernst Schmied, two of his old comrades from Infanterie-Regiment 16, having joined his regular group, on the morning of Tuesday, June 25, Hitler left 'Wolfsschlucht' for the Champagne area of France on his own personal battlefield tour. *Left:* **At Laon, he drove up to the top of the hill on which the town is built to visit the cathedral.** *Right:* **'The weather was poor when we stopped in Laon 60 years later', says Jean Paul, 'and the Place du Parvis was all but deserted.'**

Left: **His entourage waited outside as Hitler entered the cathedral with Schmied and Amann. Amann, who had been Hitler's company sergeant in WWI, had been a member of the Nazi Party from the beginning and in 1940 was the director of Eher Verlag, the Party's publishing house. He had lost his left arm in 1931 in a shooting accident while on hunting.** *Right:* **As these two pictures taken six decades apart show, time has stood still in the historic cathedral.**

To retrace his own footsteps of over two decades earlier, Hitler then directed the convoy to the sector to the west where his regiment had been stationed from October 1917. *Left:* **Sonderführer Walter Frenz, the Führerhauptquartier motion picture cameraman, can be seen at work while Hitler searches for a clue as to where he had been billeted some 22 years before.** *Right:* **Hitler came this way. Jean Paul: 'I found the very same place in Cerny-les-Bucy. Bernard Millet, the mayor of the village, looks on with amazement at the same picture which I have shown him!'**

Having planned a nostalgic tour of the First World War battlefields to revisit the places where he had served, Hitler had asked two of his old comrades from Infanterie-Regiment 16, Ernst Schmied and Max Amann, to accompany him. On Monday (June 24) Amann (Hitler's company sergeant) and ex-corporal Schmied arrived at 'Wolfsschlucht' specially for this battlefield tour. That same day, the Armistice between France and Italy was signed at Villa Incisa near Rome with the cease-fire due to be sounded at 1.35 a.m. the next day, Tuesday, June 25.

That evening at 'Wolfsschlucht', Hitler was sitting with his entourage in the officers' mess. The windows were open and the room was dark for the lights had been extinguished because of an air raid warning. At 1.35 a.m., from four positions around the headquarters, buglers of the 1. Kompagnie sounded 'Das Ganze Halt' (Cease-Fire). In the mess, everyone stood to attention in complete silence. As the notes died away, Keitel said a few words and three cheers went up in honour of the Führer, the Supreme Commander of the German Armed Forces. Hitler sat in silence for a minute or so, stood up and then left. Later, both Breker and Giesler who were present testified that they had seen tears in his eyes.



That morning Hitler left Brûly-de-Pesche at 9 a.m. for the battlefields in Champagne. Unfortunately, there is nothing in the FHQu war diary to trace the precise route they followed but five rolls of film taken by Hoffmann and his photographers (5078, 5079, 5080, 5081 and 5108) have enabled me to pinpoint salient points where they stopped. Travelling via Montcornet, the party first halted at Laon where they visited the cathedral. They then drove out of the city to the west to visit Cerny-les-Bucy and the Fort de Laniscourt, Hitler obviously wanting to retrace his own footsteps when he was in this sector in 1917 and 1918.

Left: **The party resumed its nostalgic tour, driving south in the direction of Laniscourt. 'I found out that this picture had been taken at the eastern entrance of the village,' explains Jean Paul, 'but Hitler, finding no easy access to the Fort de Laniscourt from there, was about to turn the convoy round and return to head south in the direction of Mons-en-Laonnois'.**

Left: **The convoy has finally reached the remote Fort de Laniscourt along a field track and, followed by Bormann, Hitler and Schmied went inside to inspect the central area of the fort.** *Right:* **'Quite surprisingly, for I had absolutely no indication as to where these pictures had been taken, I managed to find the very same corner of the yard. Although the fort is no longer a military place, access to it is explicitly forbidden, so one enters at one's own risk!'**

The party leaves. Behind Schmied and Hitler are, from left to right, Hauptmann von Below, Bormann and Amann (hidden by Hitler) and the tall figure of SA-Obergruppenführer Brückner. In between Hitler and Brückner is SS-Obersturmbannführer Dr Brandt.

Continuing his journey south, Hitler next went to Montbavin, a small hilltop village, where he visited the church.

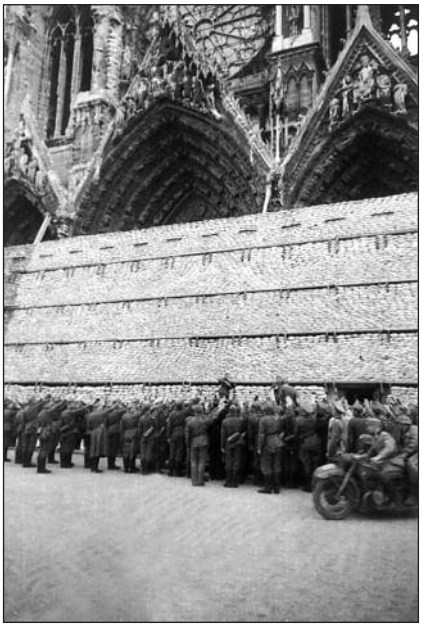
The building must have held some significance to them but, whatever it was, is now lost to history.

Returning to Laon (the hilly city is visible in the background), Hitler & Co turn southwards in the direction of Reims.

Continuing south-eastwards, along roads lined with disabled French tanks and armoured cars (see *Blitzkrieg in the West Then and Now*, page 331), they passed the Choléra cross-roads, 20 kilometres to the north-west of Reims, where pictures were taken of the Memorial to the French armoured forces of 1917-18. They then crossed Berry-au-Bac and halted at the French cemetery at La Neuville before continuing south to Reims as Hitler wanted to visit the cathedral there. They then went to the aerodrome just north of the city to return to Gros-Caillou by air and at 5 p.m., the party arrived back at the FHQu.

Near Festieux, about ten kilometres south of Laon, they passed a disabled Panhard armoured car and the lonely grave of its crew.

Cars now drive at speed along this bend of the N44 and no memorial recalls the sacrifice of the forgotten soldiers of June 1940.



Left and centre: **The front of the cathedral in Reims was still hidden behind sand-bags piled up by the French to protect the 13th-century building from being damaged in the fighting.** **Reims had fallen into German hands on June 10.** *Right:* **Sadly, polluted air and acid rain has done more damage to the cathedral in the last few decades than the erosion of centuries.**

Above: **On the second day of the battlefield tour, Wednesday, June 26 (see map page 32), the convoy drove into Fournes-en-Weppes and halted in front of the village butcher's shop. Like any ex-serviceman, Hitler was delighted to have returned to the house where he had been billeted in 1916. Its location must have been researched earlier as a notice had already been put in the shop window to signify its historical importance. This fact was later cast in stone when a large marble plaque identifying the building as the location of Hitler's 1916 billet was fixed to the facade in April 1942.**

On the following day, June 26, Hitler and his party left Brûly-de-Pesche at 9 a.m. for another sentimental tour of the WWI battlefields, this time covering Flanders. Again, there is nothing in the FHQu war diary to follow the tour step by step but my analysis of three rolls of film (5081 and 5090 and 5091) indicates the main features.

They first went by air to Lille from where they motored to Fournes-en-Weppes and Fromelles, revisiting there the places where Hitler had been stationed. The former village was of particular interest to Hitler for he had been billeted there when Infanterie-Regiment 16 was moved to the sector of the front north-east of La Bassée in July 1916.

Of this tour of the Flanders battlefields on June 26, SS-Untersturmführer Heinz Linge, Hitler's valet, later recalled: 'Notwithstanding all the great successes, Hitler was unusually sentimental, pensive and mild during these days. He praised Napoleon and some of the French kings, which I had never seen him do before. There was no longer talk of the "impure French" about which he always talked. Like he was at Ardooie, so he reacted at Fournes, Wavrin and Noyelles-lez-Seclin, places in which he was specially interested.'

Linge continued that, 'at Fournes, where during WWI he had been billeted in a butchery, he even went with Amann and Schmied into the room where he had slept as a regimental messenger. Although I noted that in conversations with foreigners,

Left: **No. 966 Rue Faidherbe, Fournes-en-Weppes, June 2002. Jean Paul: 'I found that the shop was now closed with the window bricked up but, in between the two windows of the first floor, the four pins on which the plaque once hung, were still to be seen.'**

Bottom left: **The plaque was broken when it was removed in 1944 but the pieces were saved and are now on display in the Fromelles Museum where Peter Thompson took this picture for us. Named 'Souvenir de la Bataille de Fromelles', the Fromelles Museum is dedicated to the WWI battles for the Aubers Ridge.** *Above right:* **Jean Paul explains that 'on this same roll of Hoffmann's film taken at Fournes-en-Weppes, I focused my attention on this shot of a man happily showing off a picture to the German photographer. I dearly wanted to trace the location of this 'then and now' comparison taken by Hoffmann (see opposite page), a seemingly impossible challenge as all we see in the background is a short length of brick wall. In his book *Mit Hitler im Westen* Hoffmann captions it as Fromelles but other authors have stated that it was taken in nearby Fournes-en-Weppes or at Ardooie in Belgium! To me, it was obvious that this man is saying: "Look, it's here!" so I had this small part of the negative blown up. As I expected, it turned out to be the First War picture of Hitler and his comrades in front of the same brick wall. To me, it signified that the picture was taken at Fournes! I met with Françis Delattre and André Daumars of the Fromelles Museum who agreed with me that the picture might well have been taken in the village but M. Delattre said that he had recently received information that it was taken at Wavrin, five kilometres to the east. Anyway, close examination of the garden behind the old butcher's shop in Rue Faidherbe quickly revealed that it had not been taken there. So just where was the elusive wall?'**

'Nevertheless my faith that this picture had actually been taken in Fournes-en-Weppes was not shaken by this first setback, all the more so that Messrs Delattre and Daumars identified the man showing off the picture as Louis Guichard, in 1940 the local tax collector! They also recalled that in 1916 the Germans had established an infirmary in the village tax office. We rushed down the street to where it had been located in Rue Faidherbe. M. Guichard had died years ago but the house still belonged to the family and they kindly agreed to let us inspect the courtyard. However, although the door was obviously the right one, the width of the wall between the door and the window was far too small. I then reasoned that the house might be symmetrical, with another door at the rear similar the one in the front . . . so I went round to look.' *Below:* **'And there it was! An elated André Daumars proudly shows off the same WWI picture. Having recognised the young lady leaning in the doorway as Mme Marthe Lescot, M. Guichard's secretary in 1940, M. Delattre later questioned her about the visit. The main thing she remembered was how Hitler and those with him had paid no attention at all to the French and obviously knew exactly where to go as they went straight to the rear garden.'**

Fournes-en-Weppes, then and now. Jean Paul continues that '*Mit Hitler im Westen* was published in 1940, and Hoffmann captioned the picture *above* as "billet 1916" and the one *below* said that "Hitler visited his former billet of 1916 with two of his old comrades". Hence, the 1940 picture was taken to match the one taken during the First World War as a fitting "then and now" comparison.'

The incredible discovery. 'In spite of confidence in my deductions, I could not believe my eyes when I saw the same brick wall at the far end of the garden, exactly as it had been in 1916 and 1940! It was as if nothing had changed throughout 85 years. On closer inspection of the brickwork in Hoffmann's pictures, it was clear that the two pictures were not an exact match but had actually been taken side by side, the 1940 picture to the left, in the middle of the garden wall, and the 1916 picture to the right. *Left:* **Messrs Delattre and Daumars stand in for Schmied and Amann.**

Left: **From Fournes, Hitler's tour continued north to Fromelles where the front line had been in the summer of 1916. In July that year, the Allies had launched a major attack on the Aubers Ridge but no gains were achieved and the losses were very heavy, the 5th Australian Division losing over 5,500 men in just 27 hours.** *Right:* **'I found that this picture has been taken on the D141A road between Fournes and Fromelles and I climbed onto the roof of my car to take this comparison.'**

'This was another picture which had not been identified as to its location. I discovered that it had been taken at the crossroads in the centre of Fromelles with the D141 ahead, looking westwards in the direction of Aubers, and the perpendicular D22 which leads to the old front line some distance to the north. By the side of this road, one kilometre or so north of Fromelles, lies the VC Corner Australian Memorial and Cemetery. The four central figures are Bormann, Amann, Hitler and Schmied.

Fromelles suffered badly in the First World War and Hitler had difficulty recognising where he had been. This picture of the tour group was taken at the southern entrance to the village in front of what was then the farm of Louis Equine.

'From the height of the sun', comments Jean Paul, 'I estimated that the photograph had been taken about midday.' This is my comparison looking south in the direction of Herlies. The house has remained remarkably unchanged in over 60 years.'

'When I first contacted the staff of the Fromelles Museum as to the location of bunkers visited by Hitler in 1940, they sent me to the so-called "Hitler bunker" at Aubers. I knew that this was not the correct one and to prove it I sent them copies of photos from the Hoffmann negatives taken during the June 1940 tour. However they could not recognise either of the two bunkers visible in the pictures. Therefore in the summer of 2001, I decided to go to Fromelles and make a search myself. I was joined by three of the museum's staff: Messrs Daumars, Delattre and Delepierre, although none of the gentlemen could identify the locations from the photos. I started by checking out the various places where witnesses had allegedly seen Hitler and his party making stops in June 1940 so we first visited a WWI bunker in a field south of the village but it took only a second to see that it was not one of the two I was looking for.'

different from usual, he did not need interpreters and acted differently in other ways too, I did not pay any attention to it. I assumed the successful general had become melancholous when he saw the towns from his (for him too not very exciting) military past again. As the surroundings had nowhere changed very much, he remembered every house and every barn. Here and there he even recognised trees and stretches of railway lines (for example the one at Noyelles). At the time he had made drawings and paintings of them. "From here I went with Fritz Wiedemann and the regimental commander on a hare hunt", he pointed out at Wavrin.'

'We then went to the western side of the village and drove along Rue de la Biette until it turned into a field track. There, in June 1940, Mme Adeline Frémaut had seen German cars parked in a field and men walking about. We left our cars and walked to a field where we were informed that a bunker dating from the First World War was still standing. However, the field was planted with maize that was over two-metres high so there was absolutely no sign of the reputed bunker! The five of us (the three locals, plus myself and my wife) separated to walk between the rows, searching for the mystery bunker. Shouting to remain in contact in the deep jungle, we walked in one direction, then in another, then yet in another. After 20 minutes of searching in vain, I must confess that I was loosing faith and was debating with myself whether to abort the mission when a shout came from far away. It was from M. Delepierre: "Here it is!". It took some time and numerous calls to join up with Henri. When I reached him I finally emerged from the maize which was planted closely around the bunker and immediately I saw that it was the right one. "It's it! It's it!". We spent a long time cutting down the weeds which surrounded the bunker before we could take pictures but it was well worth it. Look at this superb comparison *(left)*. **Another incredible discovery while tracing Hitler's footsteps . . . in 1918 and in 1940.'**

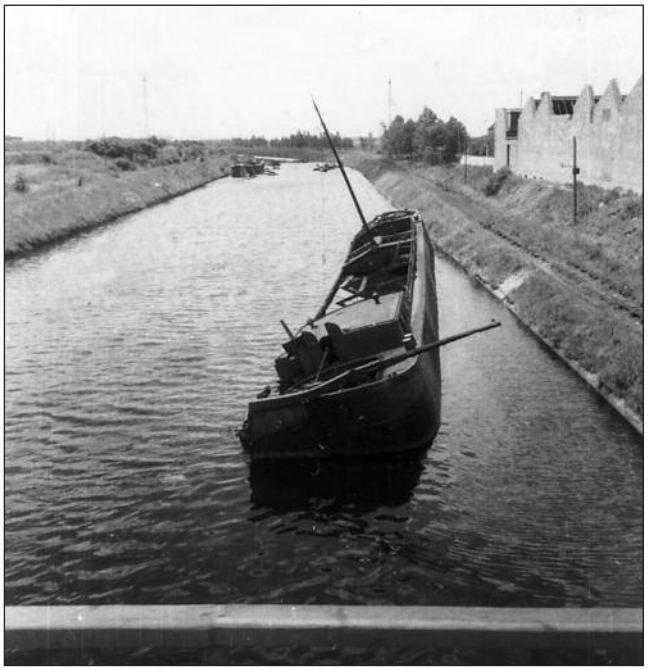
'On the other side of the bunker, the one which would have faced the Australian lines, Hitler was pictured pointing out a direct hit to Amann. Were they both sheltering in this bunker when it was hit? We shall never know.'

'I discovered that there were about 700 German bunkers of various size in the Fromelles sector of the WWI front line of which only about ten per cent remain today. How strange that Hitler's bunker is one of the survivors.'

Left: **'M. Delepierre then talked about another bunker in a field on the other side of the track. Though I felt I had already used up more than my fair share of luck for this day, nevertheless I decided to go and look at it. There were cows in this field so we had to crawl under a barbed wire fence to approach it. We were still a 100 metres away when I saw that, incredibly, it was the one featured on another of Hoffman's shots'.** *Right:* **'A proud Henri Delepierre poses in front of our discovery.'**

'Back in 1940 the party returned to their cars where Schmied was pictured watching Linge cleaning mud from Hitler's shoes. A hundred metres or so off the picture to the right Mrs Adeline Frémaut was also observing the same scene and it is from her recollection that we narrowed our search to the end of Rue de la Biette. She later related that she was digging in her garden that day when several German cars arrived, and men got out and walked into the field.

Left: **It seems that German engineers had the practice of 'autographing' the bunkers they built. The one in the maize field (page 27) was built by Bau-Pionier-Kompanie 13, while the second one at the top of this page was constructed by Reserve-Pionier-Kompanie 81, the inscription** *(right)* **indicating that it had been built (erbaut) in 1917.**



Jean Paul: 'Leaving Fromelles, no doubt in high spirits having discovered their old bunker, the 1940 tour carried on to Aubers where Hitler stopped at the British Aubers Ridge cemetery. Driving southwards to La Bassée, the convoy then crossed the canal at the southern end of the town and seemingly turned westwards in the direction of Béthune.'

Left: **'Passing the bridge over the canal, one of the photographers stood up and took this picture of a sunken barge.'** *Right:* **'The V-shaped roof of the factory has remained unchanged for over 60 years but this picture shows how, over the last few years, trees have been left growing in areas from where they were previously carefully removed.'**

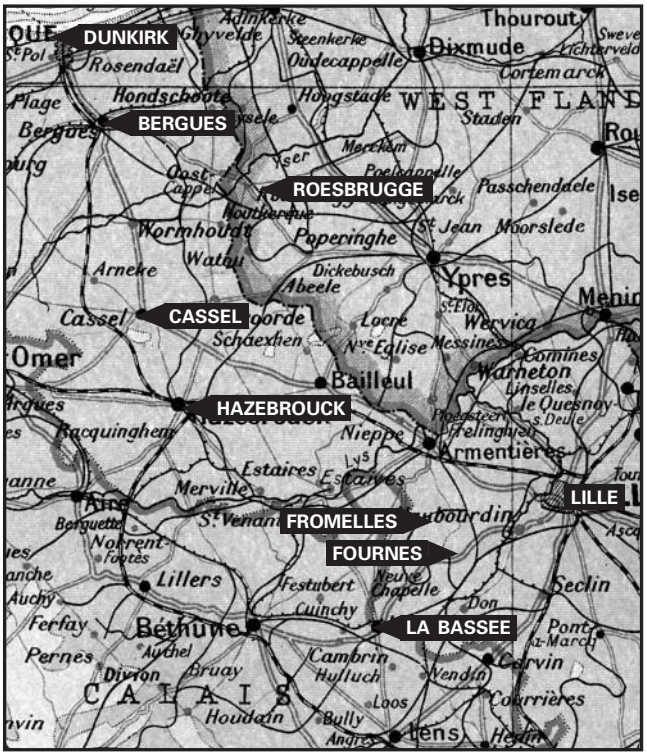
They also stopped at the British cemetery at Aubers Ridge before crossing the canal at La Bassée. They then drove northwards, probably through Cassel, to Dunkirk. Returning via Bergues and Rexpoëde the party entered Belgium at Roesbrugge. Continuing southwards though Poperinge, the motorcade reached Messines in the afternoon and crossed the French border. They passed through Lille to reach the nearby aerodrome from where they flew back to Gros-Caillou and they were back at the Führer's headquarters by 5 p.m.

'The photographer has now stopped his own vehicle by the side of the road to take a shot of Hitler's car passing by. The convoy was then moving northwards towards Dunkirk, possibly going via Hazebrouck although there are no photos to prove it. It was not easy to trace the location where this picture was taken because there are hundreds of cafés in northern France sporting 'Motte Cordonnier' advertising a local beer and I received many false leads.'

Left: **'Having pinpointed Frame 25 on Roll 5090 as being taken at Roesbrugge, between Dunkirk and Poperinge, it was of particular importance to identify this exposure, Frame 7, for I could thus then 'bracket' all the exposures in between. As the place had not changed, it was not too difficult to locate this spot at Cappelle-la-Grande, just south of Dunkirk. It seems that rain had suddenly started to fall and the convoy had halted to raise their hoods.'** *Right:* **'The same butcher's shop is still in business at the village and the road, now the D916, and the parallel canal look very similar to 1940.'**

Left: **Having crossed Bergues, the German convoy then turned eastwards in the direction of Belgium. The rain must have stopped because the journey has resumed with the tops down. This enabled the photographer to stand up while the car was on the move and take this shot of vehicles abandoned by the side of the road.** *Right:* **'Driving along the D916A, I took this comparison to match Frame 17 at Rattekot, a small hamlet between Bergues and Rexpoëde. Unlike what had happened in June 1940, the weather was not so kind to me and it was pouring with rain when I arrived at Rattekot.'**

The convoy continued along the D916A and at the western entrance of Rexpoëde the photographer got to his feet again to take this picture of the following car. But for the house at left which had been damaged during the fighting, this part of Rexpoëde has remained unchanged since June 1940.



Having moved to his new 'Tannenberg' headquarters in the Black Forest on Friday, June 28, two days later Hitler toured the battlefields in Alsace. On the return journey, the party stopped by the Rhine near Breisach to inspect battered French casemates. From left to right: Keitel, Bormann, Hitler and General Friedrich Dollmann, commanding 7. Armee.

Left: **The motorcade then crossed the Rhine via a floating bridge and returned to the FHQu 'Tannenberg' travelling through Waldkirch and Wolfach.** *Right:* **Across the Rhine, in Germany, the church at Breisach still stands.**

On Friday, June 28, at 8 a.m. Hitler departed by air from Gros-Caillou bound for Eutingen, east of Freudenstadt in Germany. From there, he was driven to his new headquarters code-named 'Tannenberg' which had been built in woodland in the Black Forest between Baden-Baden and Freudenstadt.

Hitler left 'Tannenberg' at 9 a.m. on Sunday June 30 for a tour of Alsace. Crossing the Rhine at Kehl, the party stopped at Strasbourg to visit the cathedral and then continued southwards to Sélestat (Schlettstadt in German) and Colmar. There, they turned eastwards and stopped on the western bank of the Rhine to inspect French blockhouses. They crossed the river on a floating bridge at Breisach and by 7 p.m. they were back at 'Tannenberg'.

After first visiting hospitalised soldiers in Freudenstadt on the morning of July 5, Hitler left 'Tannenberg' at 1 p.m. when he boarded 'Amerika' at Oppenau, 15 kilometres west of the FHQu. The Führersonderzug started at 1.20 p.m. and about 3 p.m. it reached Karlsruhe and Nürnberg at 8.30 p.m. where it turned north to stop for the night at Münchberg, 30 kilometres north of Bayreuth. 'Amerika' started out again at 9.06 a.m. on July 6, crossed Leipzig some time after midday and finally arrived at the Anhalter station in Berlin at 3 p.m. The 1940 campaign in the West was over.

At 'Tannenberg', the HQ was dispersed within an evergreen forest. There were two bunkers, one for Hitler and another which housed the communication centre, and several wooden chalets. Here, Hitler strolls in a typical Black Forest setting with Baldur von Schirach, the Hitler Youth Leader. Von Ribbentrop brings up the rear.

Left: **The Carlton Hotel, left, in Amsterdam was — until 1943 — the headquarters of the Luftwaffe command in Holland. The Germans had also taken over the historic Huydekoopers House next door (on the right) to hold court-martials. (NIOD)** *Right:* **The hotel undergoing restoration work in the 1980s beside the new building for the United Savings Bank of Amsterdam.**

THE CARLTON HOTEL CRASH

By J. C. Maarschalkerweerd

When German forces invaded the Netherlands on May 10, 1940, and Dutch troops succumbed after their short but gallant resistance, many important buildings were soon taken over by the occupying authorities. In Amsterdam, the capital, the Carlton Hotel, situated in the centre of the city on the corner of Vijzelstraat and Singel, became the headquarters of Luftgau-Kommando Holland (the Provincial Air Command of the Luftwaffe), and the adjoining building pressed into service for the Luftgau's Feldgericht (Military Court-Martial).

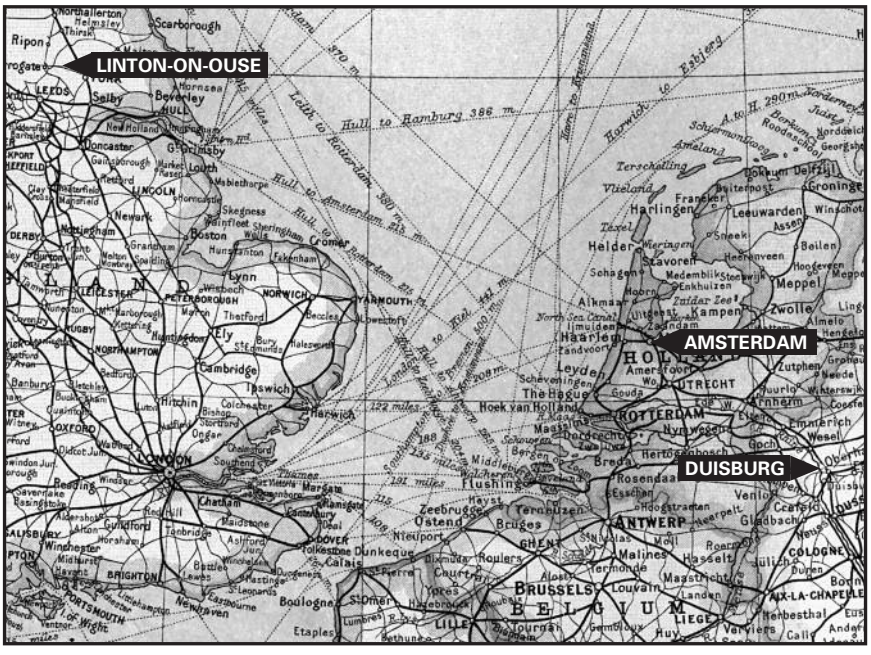
Just over three years later, the Carlton was totally destroyed when a Halifax of RAF Bomber Command crashed into the building. The fact that the aircraft accurately hit such an important headquarters led many Dutchmen to believe that this was a deliberate attempt to crash the bomber into the building in a suicide attack. Though such tactics are abhorrent to Western mentality nevertheless the myth has persisted, even to this day. The facts, however, are somewhat different.

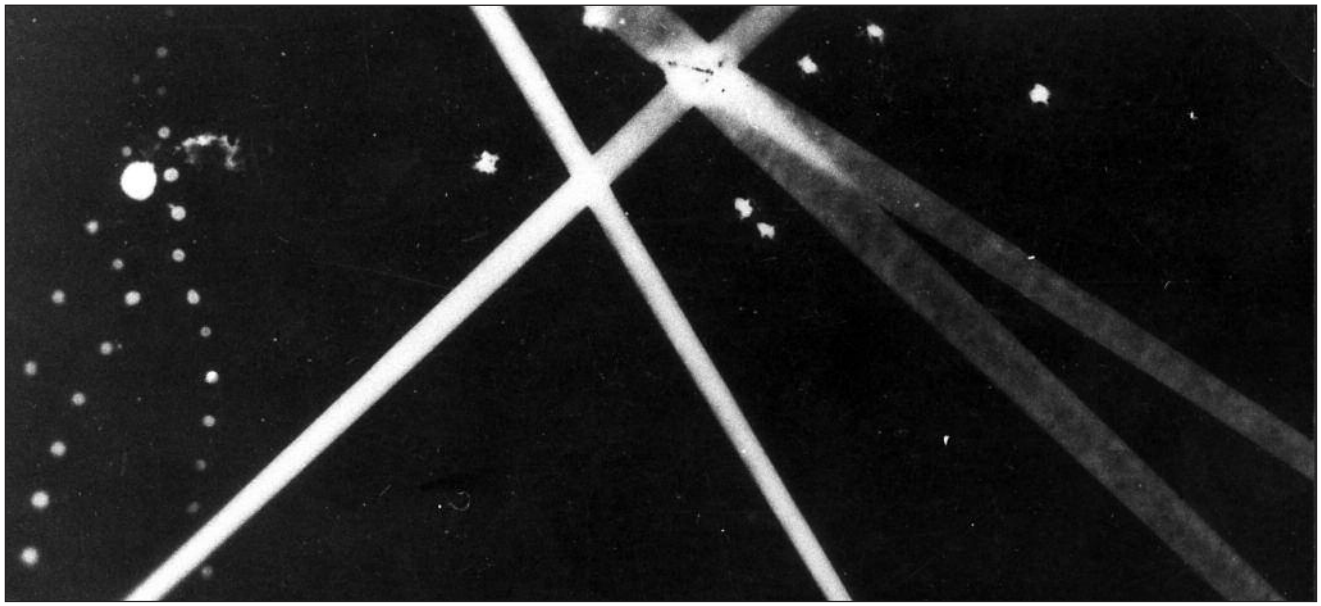
On April 26, 1943, Easter Monday, Duisburg in the Ruhr had been selected as the target for a massed attack that night by 561 aircraft: 215 Lancasters, 135 Wellingtons, 119 Halifaxes, 78 Stirlings and 14 Mosquitos. Seventeen aircraft failed to make it back to Britain, one being Halifax DG423 'H' Harry of No. 76 Squadron based at Linton-on-Ouse (see *Bases of Bomber Command Then and Now*).

The seven-man crew of Harry comprised a New Zealander, Sergeant Donald McNab, the pilot; Pilot Officer Noel Fleming as the bomb-aimer; Sergeant Fred Slingsby, the navigator; Sergeant Bert Keable, the wireless operator; Sergeant John Wood, flight engineer; and Sergeants Jack Clegg and Cliff Strain (Royal Canadian Air Force) as gunners.

The briefing to the crews described how their target would first be marked by red target indicators dropped by seven of the Oboe-guided Mosquitos, replenished by green TIs from the back-up aircraft. The wind at 20,000 feet was estimated to be 70-75 miles per hour necessitating a take-off just after midnight for an ETA over the target area at 0255.

Sergeant McNab lifted his aircraft off the runway at Linton at 0051 and set course for the usual window into the Continent over the Zuider Zee (IJsselmeer). From there a turn onto 110 degrees led to the next course west of Winterswijk to 180 degrees which led across the German border to the target, Duisburg.



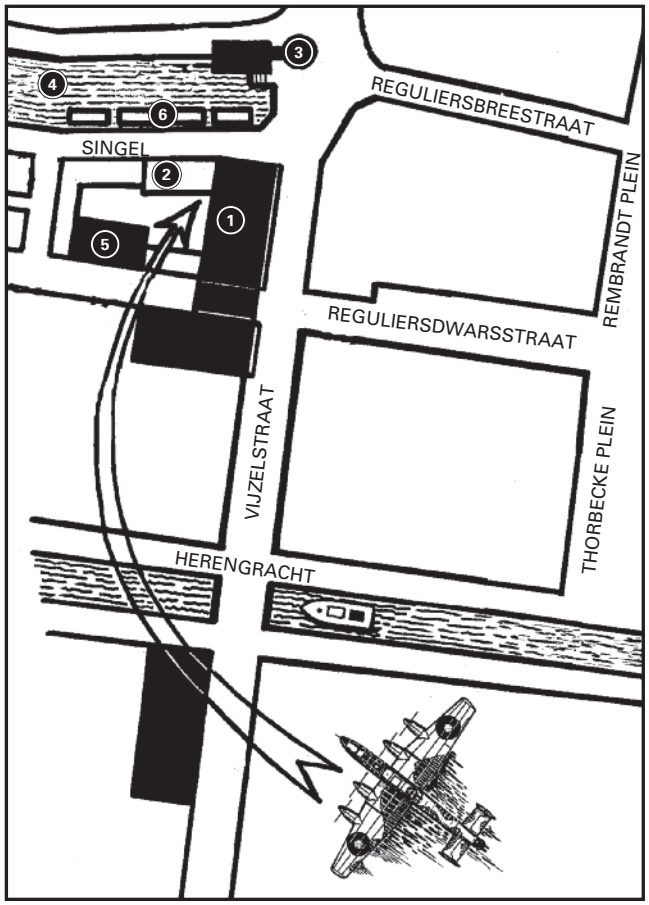


A British bomber is targeted by searchlights and guns — the same sight witnessed over the city on the night of April 26/27, 1943.

Meanwhile, at the German night fighter base at Leeuwarden, pilots of NJG 1 were preparing to meet the threat. Their 36 Messerschmitt Bf 110s were on standby, with six of their number having been dispersed to the satellite airfield at Bergen on the coast to the west. One of the pilots on Sitzbereitschaft, as the Germans called it, at Leeuwarden was the IV. Gruppe's night fighter ace, Oberfeldwebel Heinz Vinke, with his regular radio operator, Bordfunker Karl Schodl.

As soon as the bomber stream was detected by German radar, the Bf 110s were scrambled, Vinke at 15.000 feet being guided onto his target by Station Zander near Zandvoort. Closing on one of the bombers — 'H' Harry — he fired a well-aimed burst. Vinke let out a triumphant call over the radio of 'Sieg Heil Halifax' as the aircraft entered a steep dive. Vinke then turned attentions elsewhere and claimed a Stirling — most probably BF383 (WP-T) of No. 90 Squadron which crashed into the IJsselmeer.

The crippled 'H' Harry was next spotted on fire flying low over the Noordzee Canal which runs from IJmuiden on the coast to Amsterdam where the German flak was waiting to finish the job. Whether any of the crew were still alive, injured, or dead at that stage will never be known for no one attempted to bail out. From eyewitness reports on the ground, it appears that after the aircraft reached the western outskirts of the city, it flew in a wide circle before it crashed into the Carlton Hotel.



The last fateful moments of Halifax 'H' Harry. [1] Carlton Hotel. [2] Huydekoopers House. [3] Munttoren. [4] Singel Canal. [5] Social Security building. [6] Flower-market barges.

Oberfeldwebel Heinz Vinke of IV./NJG1 displays his 'Victory Cane' indicating 26 kills, one being Halifax DG423 of No. 76 Squadron, another the Stirling BF383 of No. 90 Squadron.

Left: **Orteliusstraat. The home of the Herman family is on the right. It was from the balcony that young Jan and his father witnessed the death throes of the Halifax.** *Right:* **G. H. Krüger pictured the precise moment when the fuel tanks exploded. (NIOD)**

At No. 364/1 Orteliusstraat lived the Herman family and although it was long past his bedtime, ten-year-old Jan was on the balcony with his father. They had a clear view towards Haarlemmerweg and the small hamlet of Sloterdijk just to the west of Amsterdam. A flak battery, with associated searchlights, was sited near the Marechaussee (military police) barracks which, Jan recalls, were frequently strafed by British or American fighters.

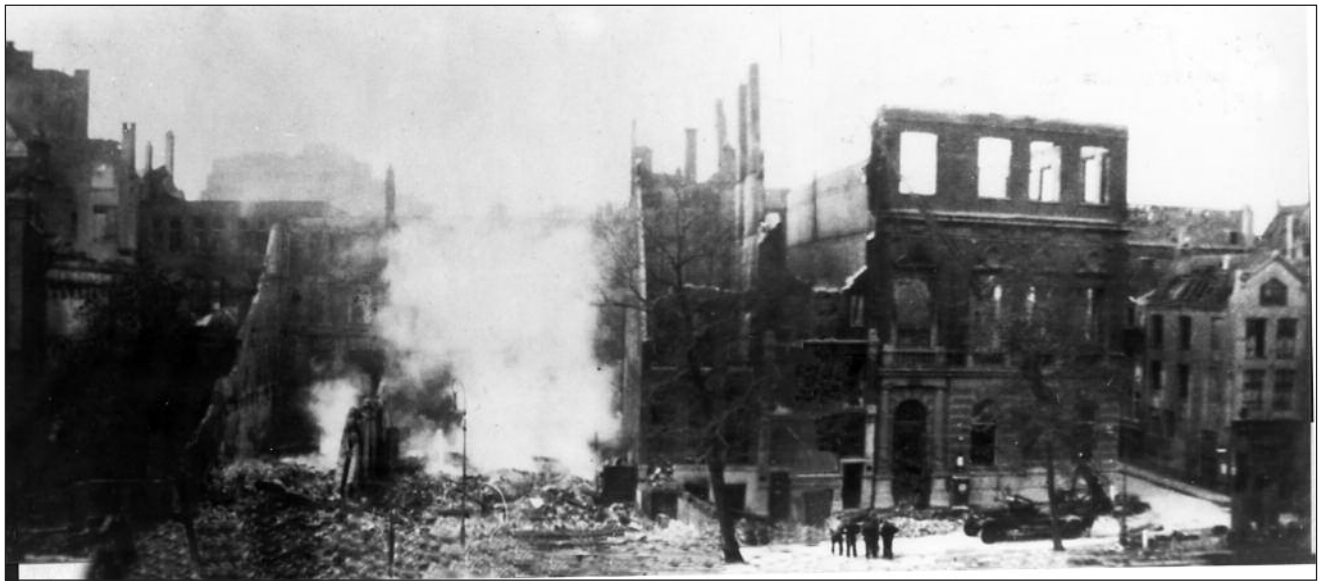
'That night, my father and I were alarmed by the noises of increasing activity around the battery', recalls Jan. 'From where we stood, we could not see the flak guns but it was obvious that something was going on as the beams of the searchlights were scanning the sky. But since the air raid warning had not sounded, there was no reason for us to go to the shelter.

'Suddenly we heard the sound of aero-engines from an approaching multi-engine aircraft, probably a British bomber. Looking up into the sky, we observed underneath the low heavy rain cloud a four-engined aircraft caught in the beams of the searchlight. The pilot was desperately trying to get out of the blinding light. The flak guns began to fire as well as several anti-aircraft guns on top of the dyke. We saw the tracer bullet streams coming from those machine guns hitting the aircraft. Turning around and around in wide circles in an attempt to avoid the hell of fire coming towards it, the aircraft lost height rapidly. It then flew low across the rooftops of the houses alongside Hoofdweg [the street next to Orteliusstraat] and disappeared from our view. Next morning we were told that a British bomber had crashed on top of the Carlton Hotel.

'A few days later, my father and I went to take a look at the spot where the aircraft crashed. From what we could see, the bomber had in fact not come down on the hotel itself but just behind it, nearer to Geelvincksteeg. The hotel was burned out and had collapsed completely. The windows of most of the houses and buildings in the area were broken but I remember one remarkable thing: due to the immense heat the glass of some bottles in a crate on a barge on the nearby Singel canal had softened and the necks were now hanging down instead of standing straight up!'

View from across the Singel Canal. With the Carlton on the left, this is the ruin of the German court-martial building. (NIOD)

In this post-war picture, taken from the top of the Mint Tower, the courthouse has been reduced to a single-storey structure. (NIOD)



The Halifax crashed behind the hotel, the burning fuel and incendiaries setting the whole block alight. This is the western end facing the canal with the corner of Geelvincksteeg on the right. (NIOD) In the comparison *below***, note that the same building still stands on the extreme right of the photo.**

Another witness was Peter Saul who lived at No. 6 Utrechtsedwarsstraat, just a few minutes away from the hotel. 'That night was like so many others in the early months of 1943 when night after night we heard the sounds of aero-engines overhead. On that particular night our sleep was also disturbed by the firing of the anti-aircraft guns. I saw a British bomber caught in the searchlights getting the immediate attention of other searchlights and the co-ordinated fire from guns in different locations. All were concentrating on that one aeroplane — the noise was incredible.

'I remember the bomber was in great distress. It was on fire with one or two engines out. The cockpit area seemed free of flames but as it flew overhead I could see straight through large parts of the wings and fuselage. Burning fuel and molten metal was falling down on the streets and houses, and it was so low that I could feel the heat as it passed our house. It was a most frightening sight and I was shocked, unable to move, wondering how the crew could possibly keep their crate flying for so long. It was almost unbelievable that it was flying at all!'

The Halifax crashed still with its 4,000 incendiaries on board at 0234 (Dutch time) and a few minutes later there were two explosions. All the crew were killed and Peter Saul's grandfather, who was employed as a maintenance man at the hotel, helped in the recovery of the charred corpses.

Left and centre: **Two more views showing the rear of the Luftwaffe HQ on the left. Bearing in mind the damage, German casualties were quite light: three dead and nine wounded, but five civilians were killed including a young boy whose body was never found. (NIOD)** *Right:* **The replacement for the court alongside the enlarged hotel.**

On the following morning, spectators were held back on Koningsplein as the fire brigade were still tackling the fires which can be seen burning further down the street. (NIOD)

One other 'witness' was the 13-year-old diarist Anne Frank in her secret hiding place in the centre of the city (see *After the Battle* No. 102): 'The Carlton Hotel has been destroyed, two English flyers with a heavy load of incendiaries fell exactly on the Offiziersheim. The whole corner of Vijzelstraat-Singel burnt down. The air attacks on German cities have been increased from day to day. We do not have a good night of rest any more and I have black circles around my eyes due to lack of sleep.'

Anne also mentioned that the Burgerlijke Stand — the Registry of the Municipal Bureau of Social Affairs — suffered extra damage because members of the civil fire brigade deliberately pumped an unnecessary amount of water into the building in a partly-successful attempt to destroy personal information to deny it to the German secret police.

The scaffolding highlights the position of the Carlton undergoing restoration in this comparison taken 46 years later.

The streets were sealed off until 4 a.m. but then, as soon as they were allowed out, people flocked to the scene. The crash was a talking point for weeks and the fact that it had neatly wiped out the German HQ fuelled speculation that it had been done deliberately. Nevertheless, it was just the sort of fillip that the people of Amsterdam needed to boost their flagging morale at that stage of the war.

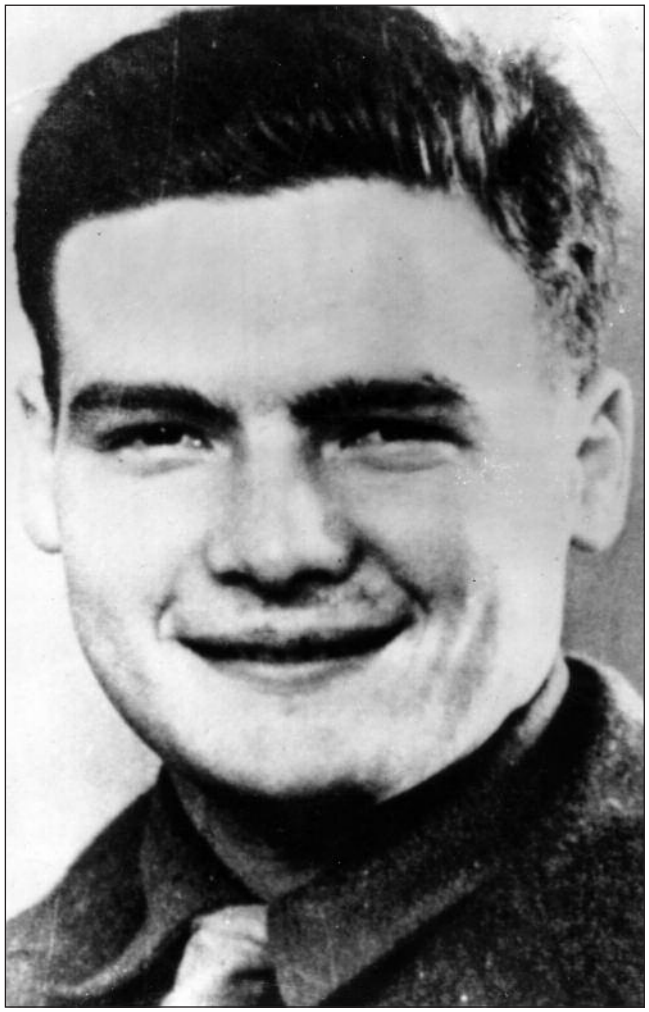
As far as the Germans were concerned, they sought to play down the event and the German-controlled newspapers did not publish anything about the extent of the damage, or its effect on the Luftwaffe, or that numbers of Germans had been killed as well as civilians. Behind the scenes, the Reichsfuhrer-SS Heinrich Himmler was informed by the SS police chief, SS-Gruppenführer Hanns Rauter (who would be assassinated in March 1945 — see *After the Battle* No. 56), in a telex on April 27:

One of the Rolls-Royce Merlins is removed with the help of a block and tackle. (NIOD)

'When American bomber aircraft, attacking Oberhausen last night, flew back early this morning, among others, one of these heavy four-engined Americans was shot down by one of our night fighters over the city of Amsterdam. The bomber fell right onto the Carlton Hotel, headquarters of the commander of Luftgau Holland, General-leutnant [Hans] Siburg. Because it was a bomber loaded with quite a number of metal phosphor canisters, the hotel burnt down almost completely. An assisting unit of the Civil Dutch Fire Brigade Regiment [Rijksbrandweer, a national-socialist organisation] from The Hague succeeded in saving one of the wings of the hotel.'

Life gets back to normal after the largest fire in Amsterdam's history which had been fought by 150 firemen with 50 hoses including the fire-float *Jean van der Heijden*. This is Reguliersdwarsstraat (see plan page 35), looking down towards the side of the hotel which faces Vijzelstraat — then and now.

The graves of the crew in Nieuwe Oosterbegraafplaats cemetery in Amsterdam. As is often the case in Commonwealth War Graves Commission cemeteries where the remains from aircraft crashes could not be seperately identified, crews are buried in collective graves. In the case of the dead from DG423, who were originally buried in Plot 78 of the New Eastern Cemetery with other shot-down airmen, 38 graves in that plot were regrouped to their present location in Plot 69 in the 1950s.



As an appetizer to our forthcoming book *Operation 'Market-Garden Then and Now* **(due to be published next month) we present the story of Pfc Ted Bachenheimer** *(left)*, **legendary scout of the US 82nd Airborne Division. Already held in awe within his own regiment, the 504th Parachute Infantry, for his dare-devil solo infiltrations behind enemy lines in Sicily and Italy in 1943, Bachenheimer became famous overnight during the Holland operation of September 1944 when he took over and commanded a large force of Dutch underground fighters at Nijmegen — a story that made headlines in the US as 'The private who became a general'. Three weeks later, sent on a secret mission behind enemy lines, Bachenheimer disappeared without a trace. For many years after the war his former comrades in the 82nd, who remembered him with veneration, wondered how he had come to his end. Though his remains had been recovered after the war, for nearly four decades the facts surrounding his last days remained a mystery — that is until a schoolmaster at the Dutch village of 't Harde started to wonder about the Allied soldier whose death had been commemorated in his village since the war.**

THE ODYSSEY OF PRIVATE BACHENHEIMER

By Frank van Lunteren and Karel Margry

Theodore H. Bachenheimer was born on April 23, 1923, in Braunschweig in Germany as the eldest son in a Jewish family. His father, Wilhelm, was a pianist, composer and director of opera, his mother Katharina a stage actress. He had one brother, Klaus, who was three years younger.

When the Nazis came to power in 1933, and with the growing persecution of the Jews, the Bachenheimers decided to leave Germany. The family fled to Prague, then on to Vienna, and from there to France. By then, Ted's parents had decided to emigrate to the United States. In 1934 the family boarded the SS *Majestic* at Cherbourg and crossed the Atlantic. They filed applications for US citizenship and went to live in Hollywood, California, where Ted's parents soon found work in the entertainment industry. His uncle, Theodore Bachenheimer, who had also emigrated to the US, directed *The Waltz King*, *The Merry Widow* and many other successful productions. Ted grew up in a theatre environment and it was only logical that he would follow in his parents' footsteps. In 1941, at the age of 18, he enroled as a student of drama at Los Angeles City College with aspirations to become an opera singer.

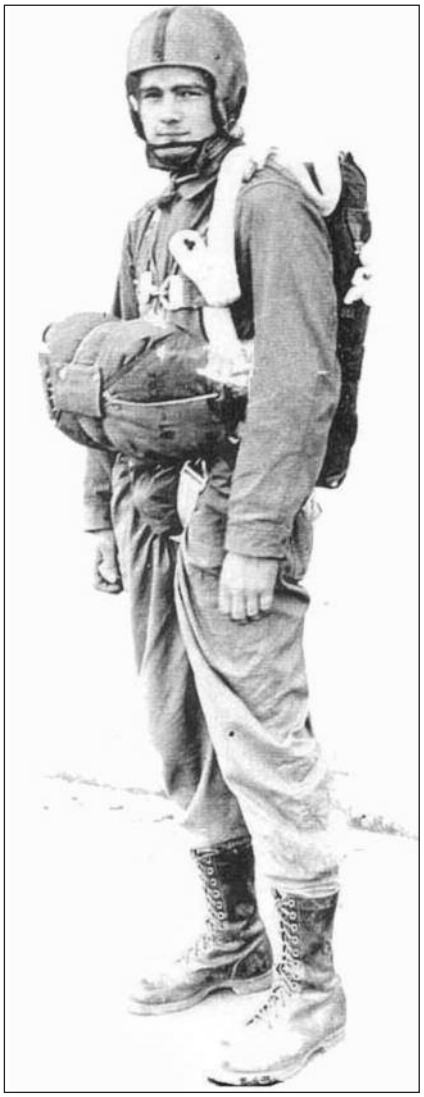
Shortly after, Japan attacked Pearl Harbor and the United States entered World War II. In early 1942, Ted enlisted for service, volunteering for the new paratroops arm. He completed the gruelling paratroopers' training, acquired his jump wings and was assigned to the 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, newly activated on May 1 at Fort Benning, Georgia, under the command of Colonel Reuben H. Tucker. Bachenheimer was in Company C of the 1st Battalion.

Gentle and soft-spoken, his boyish rosy-cheeked face topped by dark curly hair, young Bachenheimer appeared anything but a tough paratrooper and his comrades wondered whether he would be able to endure the rigours of combat. However, his outside appearance belied an strong inner determination. The young trooper made no outward display of his hatred for Nazi Germany but he was pledged to conducting a one-man war against Hitler.

A saddening occasion around this time was the death of his father.

In August 1942, the 504th Regiment was made part of the 82nd Airborne Division, transferring to Fort Bragg, North Carolina. It was here that Bachenheimer took the oath of American citizenship. Just before he went overseas, on March 23, 1943, he married Ethel Murfield (whom he called Penny), a girl who worked as time-keeper for Douglas Aircraft Co at Fullerton.

On April 29, 1943, the 82nd Airborne left for North Africa, Bachenheimer sailing with the 504th from New York harbour aboard the troopship *George Washington*. Arriving in Casablanca, Morocco, on May 10, the 82nd Airborne spent the following two months training and waiting for combat at Oujda camp in the Algerian desert. In early July the division moved by truck to Kairouan, Tunisia, the point of departure for its first combat mission, the Allied invasion of Sicily.



Bachenheimer pictured prior to a training jump at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, in early 1942. Of German-Jewish descent, only nine years before he had been a schoolboy in Germany. (courtesy Ethel Betry)

On the first night of Operation 'Husky', July 9/10, the 505th Parachute Infantry and the 3rd Battalion of the 504th jumped near Gela. The 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 504th arrived the following night. Their mission turned into disaster when friendly naval flak shot up their aircraft, and the drop was badly scattered (see *After the Battle* No. 77). Bachenheimer was one of the unlucky ones. He parachuted directly onto a German fortified position and was taken prisoner before he could get out of his harness. Taken to a German command post, he was questioned, but his interrogators got little out of the lanky paratrooper. His captors were unaware that he could speak German and so they talked freely in his presence. Standing outside the CP, waiting for transfer to a POW enclosure, Bachenheimer listened through the open door as German commanders discussed plans for an attack. A little later, noticing that his guard had carelessly gone to a latrine, he bolted away into the darkness and escaped. When he rejoined friendly units a few hours later, he was able to pass on the information he had picked up at the enemy CP. That was the beginning of his unusual combat career.

During the remaining days of the Sicilian campaign, Bachenheimer showed what kind of soldier he was. It was here that he began making a name for himself for his dare-devil, behind-the-line exploits. He went on numerous night patrols, volunteering for many of them. He often went out on patrols alone, never failing to come back with valuable information or prisoners for interrogation. There were other troopers who did the same, but Bachenheimer used his mastery of German to develop his own unique method. On more than one occasion, he would creep up to a German trench or foxhole in the darkness and, keeping a discreet distance, engage the occupant in friendly conversation in German. When he had extracted enough information from him, or had grown tired of the masquerade, he would pull his pistol, shove it in the startled German's stomach and quietly order him to come along. If the man resisted, he would kill him. Either way, he would then nonchalantly return to his own lines. By the time the Sicily campaign ended, Bachenheimer had acquired the reputation of being an extraordinary master scout.

On the night of September 13/14, the 504th Regiment (minus the 3rd Battalion which had come in by sea) jumped into the Salerno beach-head, a hastily-mounted reinforcement operation that helped to save the situation for the Allies (see *After the Battle* No. 95). Moving into the hills overlooking the beach-head, Bachenheimer's 1st Battalion fought a series of ferocious battles around Altavilla, staving of German counter-attacks and braving the heavy artillery. Relieved on the 20th and moving round by LCI (infantry landing craft) to the western flank, the 504th then led the dash to Naples, entering the scarred city on October 1. For a while, the troops enjoyed a break from the war doing garrison duty in the city.

For the next two and a half months, the 504th was used as regular infantry in the rugged mountains of central Italy. On October 29 the regiment was committed on Fifth Army's right flank in a drive across the Volturno to Isernia and the summit of Hill 1017 — which it gained in mid-November. On December 10 the 504th was ordered to assault Mt Sammucro and the adjacent hills around Venafro, positions dominating the gateway to Cassino. It was an uphill fight against bare, rocky, 45-degree slopes, under constant heavy enemy shelling and in dismal winter weather. Throughout this period, combat was mostly restricted to small local engagements between patrols — an ideal setting for Bachenheimer's solo infiltrations. By then, he had been made a member of the 504th Regimental Reconnaissance Platoon. Part of the S-2 (Intelligence) section of Regimental HQ, it united the best scouts from all units within the regiment.

One night, so the story goes, while roving the dark trails of the Volturno country, he discovered a six-man enemy patrol toiling uphill. Sneaking up on them, he killed the rear man with his knife and took his place. One by one he liquidated the man in front until only two were left. These he shot. (In another version of this same story, the two remaining Germans sat down near the crest to catch their breath. Clutching a machine gun, Bachenheimer closed in on them and said: 'Sit perfectly still. You are my prisoners.' One of the Germans appeared ready to leap at him but Bachenheimer just said, 'Think of your comrades'.)

On November 14, Bachenheimer was with a scout patrol of 12-14 men in a farmhouse in the village of Rochetta when they suddenly found themselves cornered by a heavily armed platoon of Germans. Just before an intense fire-fight broke out the patrol commander, Lieutenant Harold M. Gutterman, ordered Bachenheimer to get help from the 2nd Battalion. He dashed out of the front door, keeping close to a cemetery wall for cover. While he was away, things at the farm got critical. Bachenheimer returned with reinforcements just in time to save the situation and turn the scale of battle, but by then Lieutenant Gutterman had been killed. In a letter home to his family Bachenheimer wrote: 'They had wounded one of us and killed my lieutenant. He is the reason we did not celebrate. He was one of the swellest human beings I ever knew. He reminded me somewhat of Papa. Both neither smoked nor drank outside of an occasional beer. Both were very quiet and helpful, and both were liked by everyone they ever met. It was a real shock when I heard of his death.'

On January 22, 1944, the 504th Parachute

Bachenheimer's baptism of fire was the invasion of Sicily in July 1943. Captured immediately after his jump, he escaped the same night with important tactical information on enemy plans, which he had overheard at the command post where he had been questioned. It was at Sicily that he established himself as a trooper who daringly made use of his fluency in German to get information on the enemy. Here a patrol of paratroopers cautiously advances through an olive grove 'somewhere in the Sicilian countryside'. (USNA)

Bachenheimer's reputation with his fellow-troopers grew to almost mythical proportions during the battle for the Anzio beach-head in Italy from January 22 to March 23, 1944. Roving behind enemy lines almost daily, mostly on his own, he never failed to bring back information or prisoners for interrogation. For most of the eight-week battle, the 504th Regiment was dug in along the Mussolini Canal in the south-eastern corner of the beach-head. Here troopers of the 2nd Battalion, 504th, cross the canal on January 26, when the situation was still fluid. (USNA)

Infantry participated in the Anzio seaborne assault (see *After the Battle* No. 52), disembarking from 13 LCIs on Red Beach. The regiment fought under command of the US 3rd Infantry Division on the right flank of the beach-head, mostly along the line of the Mussolini Canal. There was offensive fighting in the first ten days of the battle but after that, and for the remaining seven weeks of the campaign, it was strictly trench-type warfare, the paratroops digging in along the canal and the Cisterna river and living in foxholes. Combat was limited to night patrols through enemy lines and minefields. It was during this period that Bachenheimer became really legendary.

One night, he and a fellow soldier from the Recon Platoon, Pfc James McNamara, left the outpost line aided by a diversionary burst of fire by other troopers. The two men bellied their way through the German lines, circling round to come up from behind on a German machine-gunner. 'Bachenheimer told me to wait', McNamara afterwards recounted. 'I watched as he stood up and walked towards the outpost, stopping once to talk to the Kraut, to reassure him that everything was okay. I lay there with my stomach flipping over, afraid even to breathe. All this time I could hear Bachenheimer and this Kraut carrying on a muffled conversation like they were long-lost buddies. Finally the talking stopped. I heard our pre-arranged signal and crawled toward them. Ted had relieved the surprised Kraut of his pistol. With the prisoner between us we made our way back to Company C.'

On yet another night, Bachenheimer was persuaded to take along three other troopers on a patrol. Out in no man's land, a flare went up and the patrol was raked by machine-gun fire. The other three men, reasoning that their task was to locate German positions, headed back to their own lines but Bachenheimer carried on forward. Minutes later, automatic weapons were heard in the direction that he had taken, followed by ominous silence. His three comrades speculated that Bachenheimer must have been killed. However, a half hour after they had returned to their lines, an outpost telephoned the 504th: 'Bachenheimer just passed here on the way back. He has got a Kraut sergeant in tow.'

The Feldwebel in question was mortified that he been captured by 'a kid ten years younger than me' and insisted on telling the 504th intelligence officers what had happened. His men had been nervous about enemy patrols and one of his outposts had opened fire at a 'movement'. Going forward to investigate, the Feldwebel had heard a voice call out in German 'Hier sind die Amis. Wir haben Sie.' (Here are the Americans. We've got them.) As he walked toward the voice, its owner turned out to be Bachenheimer who had pointed a pistol at his stomach and said, 'Come with me or you're dead'.

Bachenheimer prowled so often behind enemy lines that he knew the names of German company commanders, where various headquarters, supply points and medical stations were located, and even if certain officers were liked or disliked by their men.

One night, he was out again on his own when he came upon a German soldier in a slit trench. He sat down as usual and engaged the soldier in conversation, telling him that he was from a neighbouring unit. However, when he pulled his pistol and quietly ordered the soldier to come with him, another German, who had overheard the last remark, raised up and shot Bachenheimer through the left hand. The paratrooper killed both Germans, then returned to his own lines. On the way back he stuffed dirt into his wound to stop the bleeding. When his battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel Warren Williams, told him that he would be evacuated to Naples for treatment, Bachenheimer protested so vigorously that Williams in the end let him stay.

By now, stories about Bachenheimer were circulating throughout the regiment. Most were true but, as always happens with hearsay, some stories were altered or gained embellishing details as they went along and it becomes difficult to distinguish myth from reality.

One night, accompanied by a buddy who spoke no German — according to one story — he sneaked up on a German having a meal of wieners and potatoes. The unsuspecting German invited them to share his rations. The three men sat eating in the darkness until Bachenheimer told the German that he had better eat well as he might not eat for a long time. When the suspicious soldier reached for his gun Bachenheimer shot him through the throat. This story may be the origin of another one which told how he joined a German chow line and, having finished the meal, captured the whole group of soldiers with whom he had been eating and led them back to the 504th.

Bachenheimer's unusual encounters with Germans became so widely known that *Stars and Stripes*, the official Army newspaper, sent a special reporter out to get a story about 'the Lone Raider of Anzio'. After crawling around the front lines for two days, the Army correspondent filed a report that he could not find Bachenheimer because he was always out on patrol somewhere.

Despite his growing fame, Bachenheimer remained something of a mystery man, even within his own unit. A few of his buddies were aware that his family had felt forced to flee from Germany, but most troopers knew little of his background. No one knew for sure how many Germans he had killed or how many prisoners he accounted for. The war forced him to kill, but he did not talk about it. If he worried about death he rarely showed it. Once, at Anzio, he confided to Sergeant Ross Carter of Company C that he knew he would not survive if he persisted in his behind-the-line forays but, so he explained, his sense of duty and the attraction of dangerous adventure were simply too strong.

Watching Bachenheimer apply soot and dirt to his face prior to one of his treks behind Germans lines, his battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel Williams, once asked Bachenheimer: 'Tell the truth, Ted. Aren't you sort of scared of these missions?' Bachenheimer pondered for a moment, then replied softly: 'Well, I'm a little nervous when I leave friendly lines, and have to piss a few times, out in no man's land. But after that, I'm not bothered.'

The 504th left the Anzio beach-head on March 23 to rejoin the 82nd Airborne in England. In June, while the regiment was stationed at Evington near Leicester, Bachenheimer was awarded the Silver Star for bravery at Anzio. The application for it had been made by the 3rd Infantry Division, under whose command the 504th had fought, the 3rd Division's chief-of-staff, Colonel Charles E. Johnson, having written up the citation.

On September 17, 1944, the 82nd Airborne

Jean Paul Pallud pictured the exact same spot, a few hundred yards south of the 'Railway Bed Bridge', in 1986.

jumped into Holland as part of Operation 'Market-Garden', the massive airborne undertaking designed to carry British Second Army across the main Dutch river and canals and win the war. Bachenheimer landed with the 504th on Drop Zone 'O' at Overasselt, the regimental mission being to capture the Maas river bridge at Grave and four bridges across the Maas-Waal Canal. It was during the Holland campaign that Bachenheimer became the most famous private of the entire 82nd.

On the first day he joined a 2nd Battalion patrol from DZ 'O' that crossed the Maas bridge at Grave under fire.

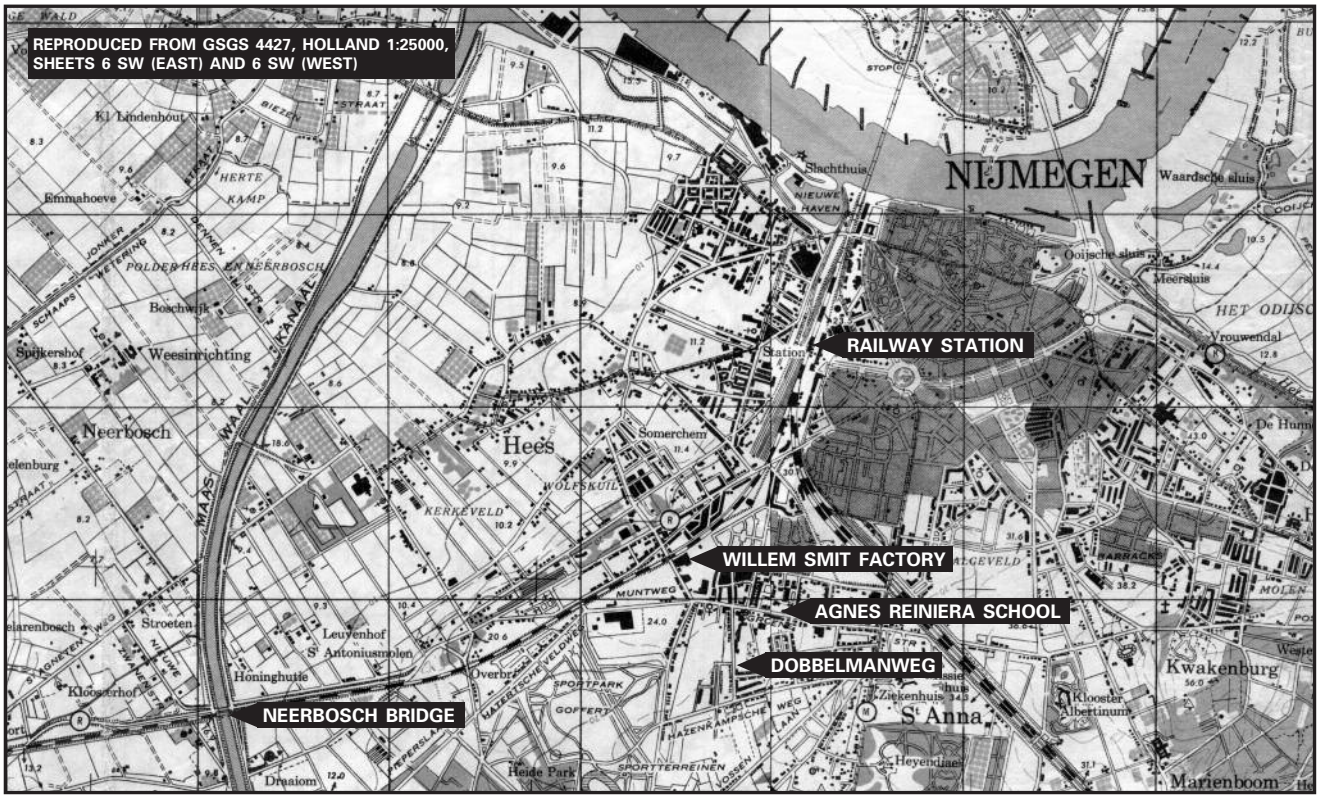
On the afternoon of the second day, September 18, troopers of the 1st Battalion guarding the damaged bridge over the Maas-Waal Canal at Neerbosch (captured earlier that morning) saw an American soldier pedalling a bicycle across in the direction of Nijmegen. It was Bachenheimer. The troopers warned him that the town was in German hands but he reacted; 'Ah, hell! I'm going over there to see what the score is.' (This was just at a moment when the 82nd Division had pulled virtually all its troops out of the city to counter a German attack that threatened to overrun the glider landing zones at Groesbeek.)

Shortly after, about 1600 hours, Bachenheimer showed up at the local headquarters of the Ordedienst (OD) resistance organisation, which was located in the Willem Smit transformer factory on Groenestraat in the south-west part of the city. The core of this underground group was not very large, perhaps 20 people, but the news that an American had arrived at the factory caused patriots to flock to the factory and their numbers swelled. At the insistence of the OD chief, P.J. Verlee, Bachenheimer assumed command of the whole group. Making the factory his CP, he began despatching spy patrols into the city, interrogating prisoners brought in by the Dutch, and passing information back to his own HQ.

The next day, September 19, he responded

Above: **Holland, September 18, 1944, and Bachenheimer comes peddling into town on his one-man reconnaissance of Nijmegen on the second day of Operation 'Market-Garden'. Although the paratrooper in this picture is unnamed, it is practically certain that it is Bachenheimer. Not only is there the strong physical likeness, but the time and place — and not least the fact that he is on a Dutch bicycle — all perfectly fit the details of his entry into town. The picture was taken by a civilian on Dobbelmanweg, which is a side street of Groenestraat. This is another strong indication that it is him as the latter street is where the next episode in Bachenheimer's career would unroll. (courtesy N. A. de Groot)** *Below:* **A Dutch cyclist stands in for the 'lone rider' of 1944.**

The Willem Smit transformer factory on Groenestraat, where Bachenheimer found the headquarters of the Nijmegen underground and which he made his command post. The factory complex stands unchanged beside the railway crossing on Groenestraat.



Map showing the Neerbosch bridge (known to the Americans as 'Honinghutje') and the other sites of Bachenheimer's time in Nijmegen.

to a Dutch request to help clear the Nijmegen railway station from German harassing fire. At 1630, he arrived at the station accompanied by just one member of the OD — much to the surprise of the man in charge there, A. van Hedel, who had expected a much larger force. Quickly the three men hatched a plan. First, searching a bombed-out German train for weapons, they found two carbines, ammunition and hand-grenades to arm the two Dutchmen. Next, they sneaked to a post on Platform No. 2 which controlled the station's public-address system. Mr van Hedel switched on the microphone and called out in German: 'Come on out with your hands up, or you will all die!' This was followed by Bachenheimer firing a few bursts from his Thompson sub-machine gun. Amplified ten-fold, the sound thundered out from four loudspeakers, reverberating like heavy artillery. The effect was immediate. The doors of the station restaurant flew open and some 40 German soldiers came running out, stumbling and falling over like in a comic movie. Bachenheimer and his companions fired a few rounds after them. The station was theirs.

When evening came, the Germans started shelling the station area and the three men had to retire. By then, the Guards Armoured Division, leading the British ground army, had reached Nijmegen and penetrated the city. British tanks and vehicles had arrived at the Groenestraat CP and they were able to occupy the station area in force. When later asked why he had gone on the station foray, Bachenheimer said: 'Well, this was the first time any of these Dutch saw an American, and it wouldn't look right for the American to run off just as soon as he saw some Germans.'

When the 504th finally moved into the city on the 20th, they found Bachenheimer sitting in his headquarters issuing orders to his guerillas. That afternoon, he joined his unit to participate in the 504th's assault crossing of the Waal river, rowing across the wide river in flimsy canvas boats under murderous German fire. But he was soon back at his Groenestraat CP.

During the next couple of days, and

On September 19 Bachenheimer, helped by just two Dutchmen, audaciously cleared the Nijmegen railway station, chasing off the German soldiers inside by calling on them to surrender via the loudspeaker system. Bachenheimer and his helpers approached the station from the railway viaduct on Graafseweg and this is the view they would have had from that direction. Although the station's main building (behind the tower on the right) is post-war, the roofed platforms have seen little change since 1944.

In the last week of September, Bachenheimer and his army of patriots transferred their HQ to the Agnes Reiniera Kindergarten, further down Groenestraat. The change had become necessary because the Willem Smit factory had started up again. The school at No. 210, a protected work of architecture, is today the De Tweeling crèche.

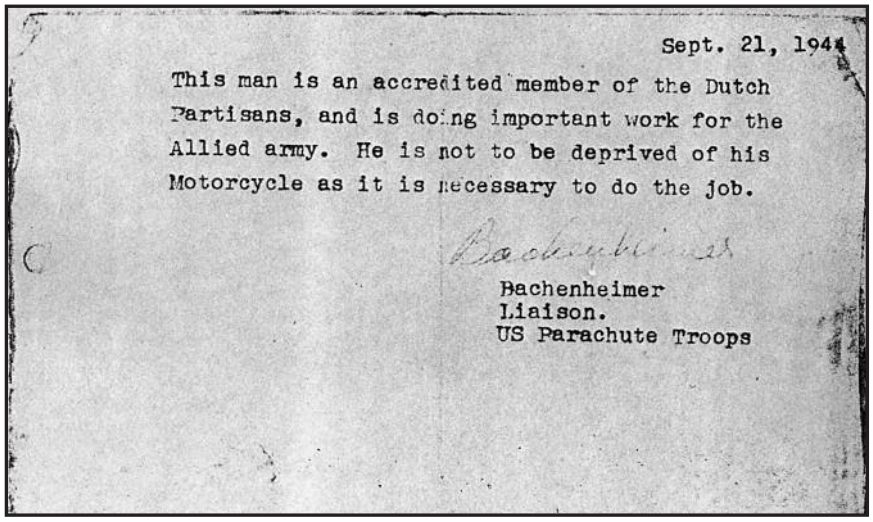
assisted by two other 504th paratroopers — Pfc Willard M. Strunk and Pfc Bill Zeller — he organised recruitment and training for the resistance, opened bakeries to help feed the population, set up telephone lines, and continued to organise patrols to scout out German positions around Nijmegen.

Operation 'Market-Garden' officially ended on September 26, but the 82nd Airborne was to stay in the Nijmegen front line as regular infantry for another seven weeks. Bachenheimer continued his work with the Dutch patriots, moving his headquarters from the transformer factory to the Agnes Reiniera Infant School further down Groenestraat.

Tales about 'an American private leading

Above: **In this group photo, taken on the side lawn of the kindergarten, Bachenheimer [3] is just turning around to talk to P. J. Verlee [4], the leader of the Orde-dienst resistance group. The other Dutch are Watse Jansen [1], Loes Schreuder [5], Jo van Hest [6], Jan Postulart [7], Mies van Haeren [8], and Opperwachtmeester der Politie Broere [9]. Jan Postulart ('Black Jan') was a team leader of the Knokploegen, the underground organisation engaged in armed resistance in the Netherlands, and he carried out many of the spying patrols for Bachenheimer. Most of the girls had been couriers for the Resistance and were now employed as typists or telephone operators. Also in the picture are Bachenheimer's two assistants from the S-2 section of 504th Regimental HQ Company, Pfc Willard Strunk [2] and Pfc Bill Zeller [10]. Zeller would be killed in action near Hitdorf on the Rhine, Germany, on April 7, 1945. (courtesy N. A. de Groot)**

Due to the trees we had to take our comparison from a slightly different angle. The houses in the background stand on Brederostraat.



Sept. 21, 1944

This man is an accredited member of the Dutch Partisans, and is doing important work for the Allied army. He is not to be deprived of his Motorcycle as it is necessary to do the job.

Bachenheimer

Bachenheimer
Liaison.
US Parachute Troops

A permit written out by Bachenheimer for Jan Postulart, who used the motorcycle referred to — an old Harley-Davidson — for reconnaissance trips into the no man's land west of Nijmegen. (courtesy N. A. de Groot)

an army of 300 Dutch patriots' drew several war correspondents there. One of them was Martha Gellhorn (then Mrs Ernest Hemingway), the female war correspondent of *Collier's Magazine*, whose despatch is worth quoting in some length:

'His headquarters is a very small crowded room in a former Nijmegen schoolhouse. Bill One, who is Willard Strunk of Abilene, and Bill Two, who is Bill Zeller of Pittsburgh — also old men of 21 — work with him in this room. They eat here and they have a neat, small arsenal hanging on the wall. They collect their souvenirs in one corner and they have the most fantastic list of callers every day.

'I listened to Bachenheimer interrogating an Alsatian prisoner and never saw a prettier or more thorough job; next he received a German informer whom he wanted to get some information about German defence constructions in the region; then, two sergeants from other regiments who were also engaged in collecting information came and had a brisk argument about a patrol they wanted Bachenheimer to send out and which he deemed unsound.

'English officers, also, arrived from time to time, and Dutch undergrounders and Dutch civilians who wanted to get collaborators arrested or wanted to get people released from jail on the grounds that a mistake had been made. Nothing seemed to worry Bachenheimer who is an extremely competent and serious boy, and nothing seemed to shake his modesty. His previous training for this work consisted of one job in America — he had briefly been press agent for a show that failed.

'Bachenheimer, who has this curious talent for war, is actually a man of peace. "As a matter of fact, I am against war in principle", he said. "I just can't hate anybody." According to Bachenheimer it does not take more guts to work behind enemy lines; it just takes a different kind of will. I think it must take a very special kind of guts, as well as a cool and agile mind. But who am I to argue with Bachenheimer?'

Articles about Bachenheimer appeared in the *New York Times* and the *Los Angeles Times*. The latter paper sent a reporter to interview his wife Penny who at that time lived with her sister and brother-in-law at 144 East Street, Fullerton. When told that her husband had wandered into a German-held town on a personal reconnaissance and formed his own army in Holland, she reacted: 'Just like him. He's always out patrolling along, trying to win the war all by himself.' (Most of the articles appearing in the American press exaggerated the size of Bachenheimer's underground army, quoting the number of patriots as 300. They also presented a garbled version of his action at the railway station, saying the Germans had trapped *him* in the building and used the loudspeaker system to ask *him* to give up — whereas in fact it had been exactly the other way round!)

Meanwhile, Bachenheimer was still only a private first class. (Actually he had been a sergeant while in North Africa in 1943 but been demoted to pfc before the Sicily jump.) He had been offered promotion to sergeant several times since but on each occasion he had turned the offer down because the rank would, he said, 'interfere with my activities' — by which he meant prowling behind enemy lines on his own. Brigadier General James M. Gavin, the 82nd Airborne's commander, is said to have asked Colonel Tucker why such a valuable man was still a private. As the story goes, the General even ordered Bachenheimer to report to him, intending to give him a battlefield commission, but Bachenheimer showed up for the interview wearing a jump suit, moccasins and a knitted wool cap. In actual fact, papers were filed in September for his commission to 2nd lieutenant, but he would not live to receive his promotion.

One of his visitors during this time was Captain Peter Baker, a British intelligence officer who was destined to become Bachenheimer's companion in the final days of his life. Baker had heard from a Resistance man that his particular group was commanded by an American major. When he and his second-in-command, Captain Pringle Dunn, went to inspect the next day, they found Pfc Bachenheimer instead who grinningly explained: `I hope you'll forgive them, Sir, for calling me major, but that's my underground rank, if you understand me.'

Bachenheimer led Baker and Dunn into his operations room where he had a large-scale map with all his private army's activities marked in crayon. 'We are holding the south bank of the Waal here', he explained. 'I have sent patrols as far as this . . . also I have despatched two men across the river at this point and I expect them to return tomorrow.' Baker and Dunn were amazed. 'You seem to have as much command of the situation as a general', said Dunn. 'Considerably more than our generals, I hope', Bachenheimer rejoined with a smile. Baker and Dunn left duly impressed — it was Baker who tipped off Martha Gellhorn about Bachenheimer.

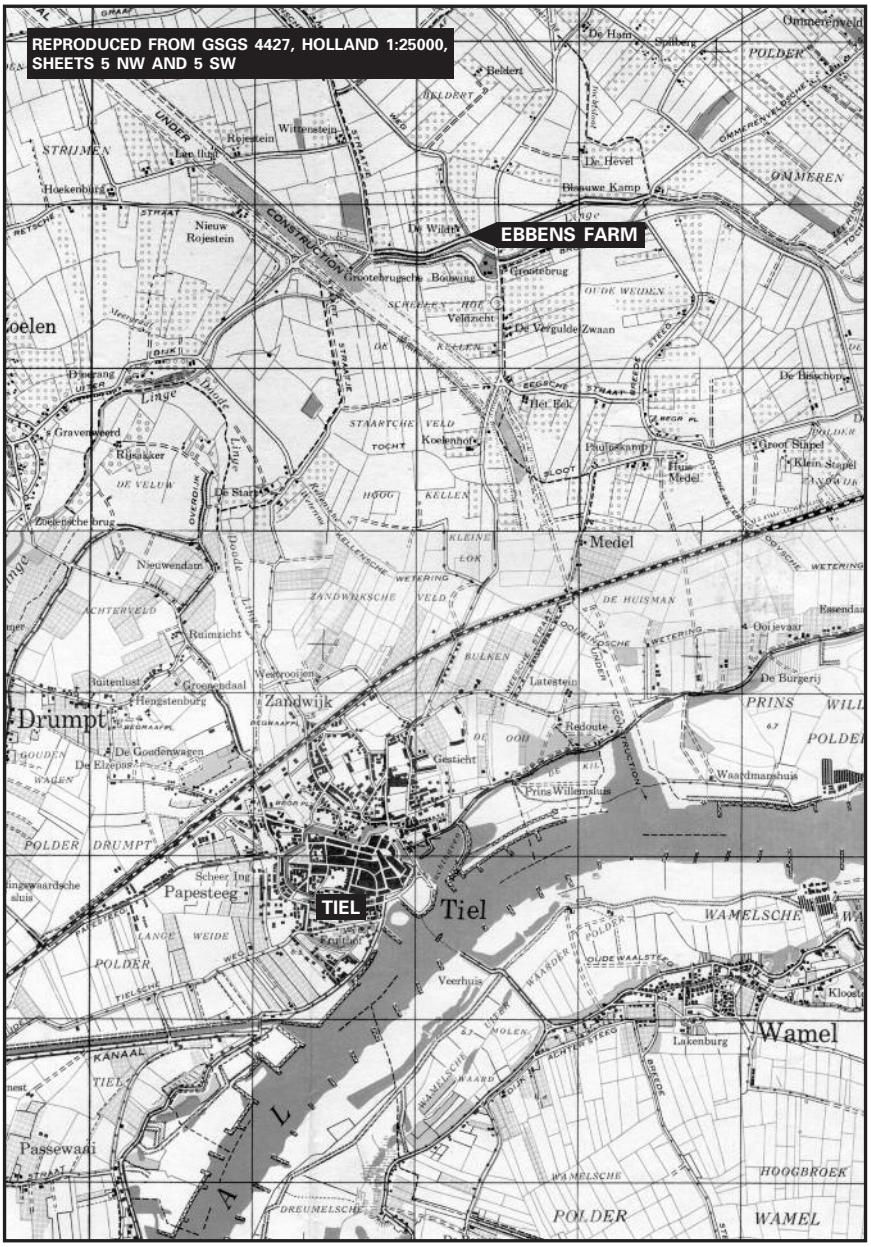
Baker's unit, IS-9 (WEA) — short for Intelligence School 9 (Western European Area) — was a small joint Anglo-American unit, an off-spring of MI9, the British secret service branch responsible for organising escape and evasion of Allied personnel from enemy territory. In the aftermath of 'Market-Garden', the IS-9 (WEA) team in Holland concentrated on organising the escape of British airborne soldiers who had been left behind north of the Rhine after the evacuation of the 1st Airborne from the Oosterbeek perimeter. Two operations were planned: one was a mass escape across the Rhine, an operation to take place near Wageningen in mid-October (Operation 'Pegasus'); the other a more permanent escape line across both the Rhine and Waal rivers, to run further west (Operation 'Windmill'). The starting point of this line would be near Tiel, 20 miles west of Nijmegen, where the Dutch underground had already started slipping across the river in rowing boats at dead of night, sometimes bringing an evader or two with them.

Major Airey Neave, the operational commander of IS-9 (who had himself escaped from Colditz in 1942 — see *After the Battle* No. 63), decided to send Captain Baker (code-named 'Harrier' for the operation) and Private Bachenheimer across the Waal to set up the 'Windmill' line. Exactly how IS-9 was able to recruit Bachenheimer for this 'cloak and dagger' operation is not clear. According to Neave, Bachenheimer just volunteered for the mission. Baker — a 23-year-old, excitable romantic who fancied himself a secret agent though he had received no formal training for it — was rowed across on the night of October 11/12. Although Neave later wrote that Bachenheimer went across in the same boat, it is more likely that he crossed one night later (as Baker remembered it), unreeling a telephone line as he went across.

Whether they crossed together or separately, both men were taken to the same safe house, the home of fruit farmer Fekko Ebbens. Located on the Linge river, halfway between the Waal and Rhine, on the edge of a tiny hamlet and set well back in the orchards, the red-brick house could not be seen from the road. Farmer Ebbens lived here with his wife and mother-in-law but at the same time the house was used for a multitude of illegal activities. Upstairs he had a Jewish family hiding from persecution. In the basement he had large stores of arms and ammunition. Shot-down airmen passed through the house. Resistance workers used it for meetings. In the garage were half a dozen local men and students hiding to avoid forced labour.

For a few days, Bachenheimer and Baker

Captain Peter Baker of IS-9 (WEA), Bachenheimer's companion during the last days of his life.



Sent out to set up an escape line, Baker and Bachenheimer were secretly rowed across the Waal river near Tiel by the Dutch underground. Both were taken to the farmhouse of fruit farmer Fekko Ebbens *(above)*, a man deeply involved in many different underground activities.

stayed there, preparing further moves. Though they had been given strict orders always to operate in military uniform and not leave their safe house in daylight, they disobeyed orders and went for a stroll in the village in civilian clothes, even giving directions to two German soldiers. A Dutch traitor may have spotted them and warned the Germans. It made little difference because the house they were in was already doomed. With so much activity going on, the Ebbens farm had caught the attention of the German Sicherheitsdienst. They had sent a Dutch quisling, Johannes Dolron, to find out more. Posing as a deserter who needed a place to hide, he had spent two weeks at the farm and then sneaked away and informed the Germans that Ebbens was hiding Jews. The Germans planned a raid on the farm.

Shortly before midnight on the 16th, there

The Ebbens farm lay on the Linge river, two miles north of Tiel. Known locally as De Wildt, in 1944 it was surrounded by orchards.

On the night of October 16/17, the Germans raided the Ebbens farm, arresting everyone in the house, including Bachenheimer and Baker. The farm and all its outbuildings was burned to the ground as a reprisal measure. Today a new house occupies the site.

was a quiet knock on the door. As it happened, Ebbens was expecting a shipment of arms from across the Waal. When he answered the door, two Germans asked whether they could come in to look at their map in the light of the living room. The deception worked. The Germans had surrounded the house. Although they came looking only for the Jews, they trapped and arrested ten men, including Johannes van Zanten (alias Van Buren), the chief of the entire Resistance district. Bachenheimer and Baker were caught asleep in beds upstairs. Just then the Resistance men arrived with the consignment of arms. There was a brief exchange of shots, in which one German was wounded, and a few of the Dutchmen arrested outside managed to escape. The Resistance fighters withdrew, shifting the arms to another hiding place.

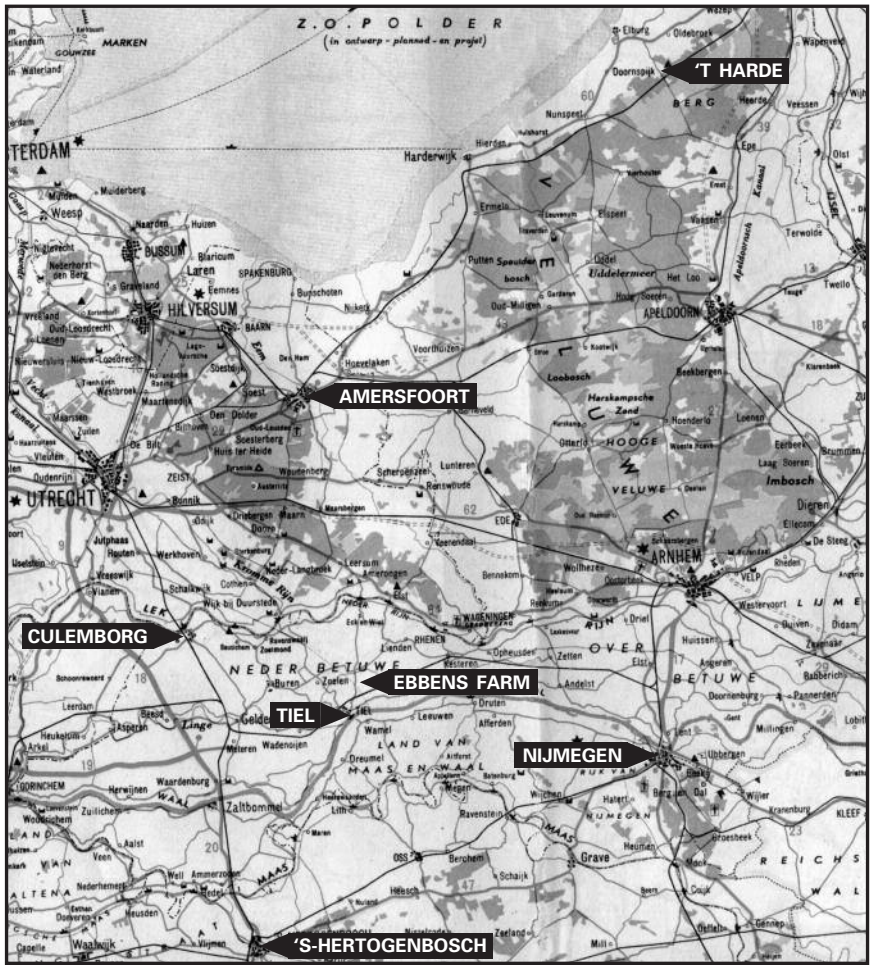
When the Germans found their uniforms, Bachenheimer and Baker were able to convince their captors that they were ordinary Allied soldiers who had been cut off from their units. Separated from the others, they were marched away to a schoolhouse in Tiel which was in use as a German battalion CP. Here, to their surprise, they were offered a drink of red wine and a sandwich by the battalion commander and his staff.

Next morning they were put in a truck which already contained Mr and Mrs Ebbens and the other arrested civilians and was guarded by a dozen soldiers. A half-hour journey brought them to a village near 's-Hertogenbosch full of German troops where there was another headquarters. Bachenheimer and Baker were told to dismount, the others were driven away. They were interrogated in turns for several hours but gave away nothing.

The arrested civilians met different fates. The captured Jews were sent to a concentration camp. Van Zanten bluffed his way out by claiming that he was just an innocent neighbour who happened to be on a visit. He and Ebbens' wife were released. Farmer Ebbens took all responsibility on him. The Resistance, desperate to help him, even tried to purchase his freedom but to no avail. Together with four others, he was shot by a firing squad at Renswoude on November 14. The Ebbens farm was plundered and burned to the ground. (The rumour that careless behaviour by Baker and Bachenheimer had caused the raid led MI9 later to make an official investigation into the affair. Ebbens' death aroused much resentment from the Dutch after the war, leading to another inquiry.)

Early on the 18th, Bachenheimer and Baker were taken to a POW transit camp at Culemborg, from where they and 30 other captives then marched 30 miles to another POW camp at Amersfoort which contained about 250 prisoners, many of them airborne troops from the Arnhem battle.

Below: **Johannes Dolron, who betrayed Ebbens to the Germans. Planted by the Germans, he posed as a Dutch deserter from the Wehrmacht looking for a hideout. After spending two weeks at the farm, he disappeared and reported everything he knew to his Nazi controllers.**



Bachenheimer's route after capture led him — via stops at Tiel, 's-Hertogenbosch and Culemborg — to the POW camp at Amersfoort. Put on a train to Germany, he escaped before the train had left Holland (his second evasion of the war), only to be caught again soon afterwards. Twenty-four hours later he was dead, murdered by a German guard and dumped from the back of a truck in the village of 't Harde, 35 miles north of Amersfoort.

Above right: **The memorial cross to 'pilot' Bachenheimer, erected by the inhabitants of 't Harde immediately after the war. (G. Thuring)** *Above right:* **In 1980, during the 35th anniversary of the liberation, local school pupils wanted to know more about the Allied soldier remembered in their village. Three years later, headmaster Albert Visser (right), finally identified Bachenheimer as the legendary airborne scout. In 1984, the cross was replaced by a Star of David. (A. Veldman)**

On the 21st both men were included in a train transport to Stalag XI-B at Fallingbostel, each in a different box-car. The train left in the early evening. During the ride, Bachenheimer and three British airborne soldiers pried open a window and jumped from the train. Shortly after, they split up, Bachenheimer preferring to carry on by himself. (Peter Baker spent the rest of the war at Stalag XI-B. He received the Military Cross, founded the Falcon Press in 1945 and became a Tory MP for South Norfolk in 1950 — a brilliant career which ended in ignominy when he was sentenced to seven years' imprisonment for financial fraud in 1954. He died in 1966.)

Sometime on the 22nd, the Germans must have recaptured Bachenheimer, but when, where and how is completely unknown. That evening, a Wehrmacht truck was driving from Harderwijk to Oldebroek when, about 2100 hours, it stopped on Eperweg, the main road past the village of 't Harde, in front of the house of the De Lange family. Two shots rang out, but the inhabitants of the house were too scared to look out to see what was happening. The following morning, German soldiers found the dead body of an Allied soldier by the side of the road. It was Bachenheimer.

Dutch officials carried out a post-mortem. They found Bachenheimer's name and army serial number on his dog-tags. For some unexplained reason they identified his uniform as that of a lieutenant in the US Army Air Force. They established that he had been killed by two bullets, one through the neck and another through the back of his head. Among the few personal items found on the body was a silver ring with the inscription *Ik hou van Holland* (I love Holland). That same day, October 23, Bachenheimer was buried in the De Eekelenburg General Cemetery at Oldebroek, a Dutch minister, the Rev. Koolhaar leading the ceremony.

Exactly why Bachenheimer was shot remains open to question. Although there are no witnesses to confirm it, the story is that he was killed by a guard in the truck after he hit the man in another attempt to escape.

Meanwhile, Bachenheimer's friends in the 504th knew nothing of all this. They had heard nothing of him since he had crossed the Waal at Tiel. To them, the master scout appeared to have vanished without a trace. When the 82nd Airborne finally left Holland after 57 days of combat, on November 13, Bachenheimer was still listed as 'missing in action'.

The Dutch locals at 't Harde never forgot the incident on Eperweg and, shortly after the war, erected a memorial cross at the exact spot where the American soldier had been found. As they knew not better than that he had been an airman, the cross referred to Bachenheimer as 'pilot'.

In April 1946, his remains were recovered from Oldebroek, and reinterred at the US military cemetery at Neuville-en-Condroz in Belgium. In April 1949, at the request of the family, the remains were repatriated to the US and given a final resting place at Beth Olam Jewish Cemetery in Hollywood, California. Ethel Bachenheimer remarried in 1950 becoming Mrs Kenneth Betry. (She still lives in Hollywood today.)

On March 3, 1952 in the Royal Palace in Amsterdam HRH Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands presented a posthumous Dutch Bronze Cross to Bachenheimer for his exceptional bravery at Nijmegen. The award was received by the American Ambassador on behalf of Bachenheimer's widow.

For nearly 40 years, the facts surrounding the last days of Bachenheimer's life remained unknown to the airborne veterans (many of whom still remembered him with awe). The mystery of what had happened to him was only unravelled in 1983 when Albert Visser, director of the Petra Primary school at 't Harde (whose pupils had asked him about who this man Bachenheimer had been) discovered that the shot 'airman' still commemorated at his village was in fact the lost 504th paratrooper. In 1984, at the instigation of Father Gerard Thuring of Groesbeek-Bredeweg (an accomplished historian of 'Market-Garden'), the cross on Eperweg was replaced with a Star of David. Every year on May 4, Dutch Remembrance Day, a wreath is laid at the memorial.

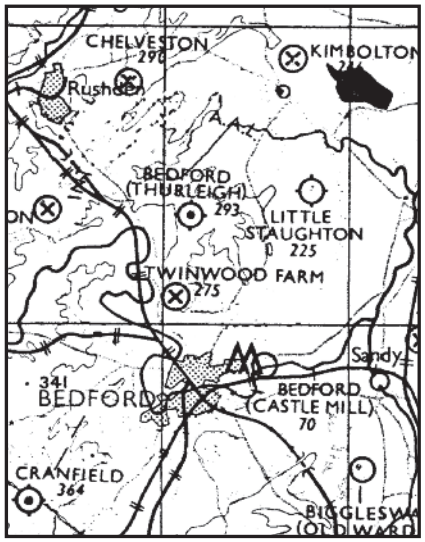
Bachenheimer's grave at Beth Olam Jewish Cemetery in Hollywood. General Gavin, wartime commander of the 82nd Airborne, paid homage to Bachenheimer thus: 'His bravery was, beyond question, of an exceptionally high order. Bachenheimer stood out more from the venturesome form his bravery took than because of the bravery itself.' (H. Klösters via G. Thuring)

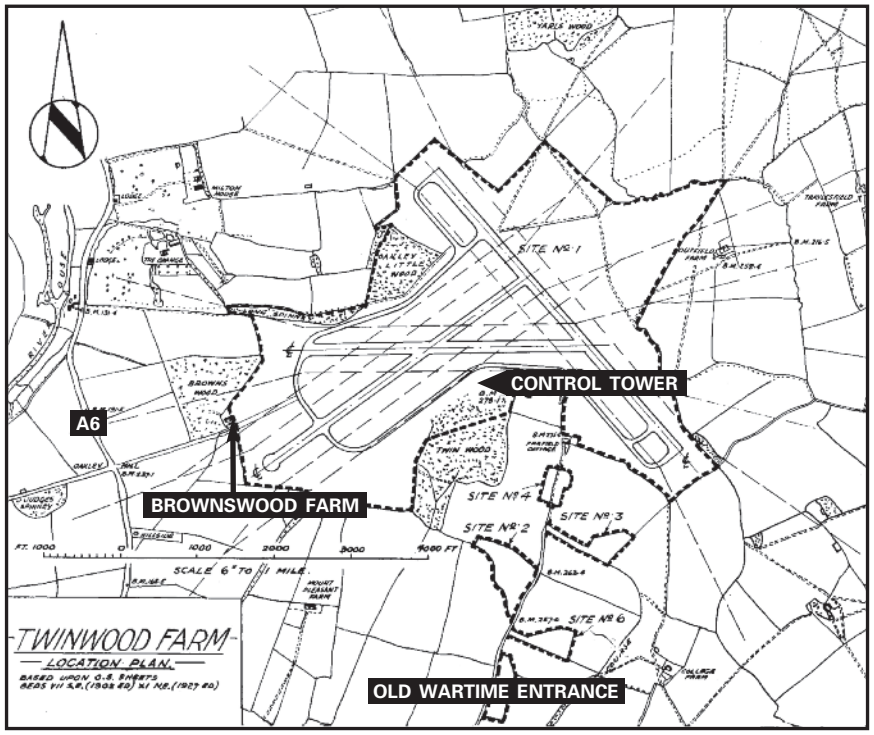
TWINWOOD FARM THEN AND NOW

During the build-up to the invasion of Europe, Colonel Ed Kirby was charged with the task of setting up a new radio station to begin broadcasting from England once the landings had begun. It was to be called the Allied Expeditionary Forces Programme and, apart from procuring the necessary technical equipment, Kirby had also to find and persuade a popular American radio orchestra to come to London.

In September 1942, Glenn Miller had disbanded his highly-acclaimed civilian band in order to join the United States Army but he was soon transferred and given the job of forming military bands for the Army Air Force. During the spring of 1943, Captain Miller began to put together a 40-piece orchestra which broadcast the first of six test programmes for Columbia Broadcasting on May 29. The Army Air Forces Training Command Orchestra as it was known was an instant success and for a year it made regular broadcasts and appeared in War Bond rallies in the eastern states.

When Colonel Kirby arrived in the States, he asked Miller for his advice over the choice of a band. Miller responded with alacrity that he would be willing to bring his own orchestra to Britain, an offer that was quickly approved. Two weeks after D-Day, Captain Miller and his radio producer, Sergeant Paul Dudley, flew to Britain to make advance arrangements for the rest of the band arriving by sea. They all met up at Gourock on the Firth of Clyde on June 28 and travelled together by troop train to London.





Twinwood Farm has become synonymous with Glenn Miller as it was from this airfield that he disappeared in December 1944. For nearly 60 years, the crumbling control tower has been a focal point for Miller pilgrims; now it has been lovingly restored and dedicated to his memory.

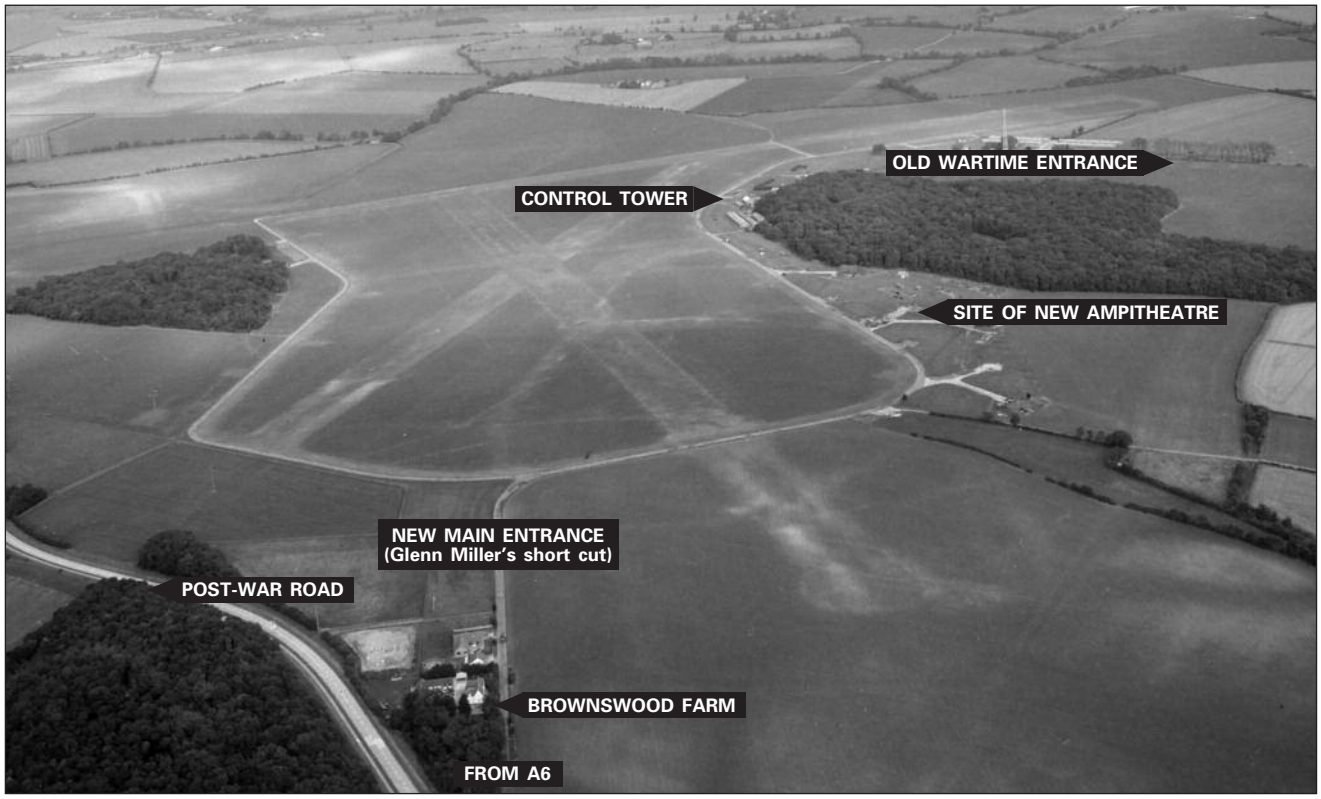
No sooner had the train pulled in to Euston than the air raid warning sounded for London was now the target for V1 flying bombs launched from France. Although the band had already been allocated billets in Chelsea Miller and his Executive Officer, Don Haynes, immediately went to SHAEF headquarters to ask for alternative accommodation outside the Capital. They saw Colonel Kirby and his deputy, Lieutenant-Colonel David Niven (see *After the Battle* No. 4), who suggested Bedford, 50 miles north of London.

The band was transferred there on Sunday, July 2, and it was not a moment too soon as the very next morning their former billet in Sloane Court received a direct hit (see issue 107, page 10).

For the next six months the orchestra, first called the American Band of the Supreme Allied Command but later renamed the American Band of the AEF, gave regular broadcasts as well as performing at bases and airfields (which are all fully documented in Chris Way's *Glenn Miller in Britain Then and Now*).

On Sunday, August 27, the full orchestra, mounted on a pair of flat-bed trailers positioned beside the control tower, and conducted by its recently-promoted leader, gave a concert at RAF Twinwood Farm as a thank-you to the officers and men of the airfield which the band often used as a staging point as it was conveniently situated three miles north of Bedford. Just over three months later the same aerodrome was to witness the departure of Glenn Miller on a flight which not only deprived the world of a talented band-leader, but spawned many fanciful theories as to why the single-engined Norseman had failed to arrive at its destination.

Two months after the band arrived in Britain, they gave a concert at Twinwood, their stage on Sunday, August 27, 1944 being improvised from semi-trailers. In this picture, Sergeant Johnny Desmond gives a solo while Miller conducts.



An aerodrome had been established at Twinwood Farm in the 1930s and at one time it was mooted as a possible location for a commercial airport serving Bedford. During the war it was used as a satellite by Cranfield for training and type-conversion, enjoying a brief period of activity when night-fighters and Pathfinder Mosquitos arrived.

The RAF moved out in June 1945 and by the time we investigated the airfield for Chris Way's book in 1995, as the picture above shows, all the runway concrete had been lifted. Fortunately most of the perimeter track remained so it was still possible to enter the airfield by the 'back-door' directly off the A6. This was the route most often used by Miller as it was closer to the VIII Air Force Service Command HQ located in nearby Milton Ernest rather than using the main entrance a mile or so further down the road through the village of Clapham. The control tower still stood but it was in parlous condition and in danger of demolition.

The last man to see Glenn Miller alive was his Executive Officer, Don Haynes, left, this picture of them both being taken when the band played at Burtonwood on August 15.

Three days before I was to leave, and precede the band by another couple of days, Glenn said that he felt he would go on ahead and that I would bring the band over afterwards. Glenn gave the impression that he had a lot of things to do and in a very short space of time as though he did not have enough time to do all the things that he had planned to do. This was not unlike him, overseas, because he would make split-second decisions and was seldom ever wrong. So I said 'Well Glenn, I have orders cut to precede the band to the Continent', and he said in his unmilitary jargon: 'Well uncut 'em and get some cut for me!' Which was done but I do have a funny feeling he went on a plane trip that I had arranged with Colonel Baessell and Flight Officer Morgan in my place. And I can't help but feel that I'm on a sort of rain-check, as it were.

The last time I saw Glenn was when I drove him and Colonel Baessell out to a Beaufighter base, about three miles outside of Bedford, England — that's in the midlands of England about 52 miles north of London. It was a cold rainy, foggy afternoon which is typical of English weather — they have summer over there on a Wednesday afternoon in July. We waited for the plane that was to pick them up coming from another base, piloted by a wonderful guy, a Flight Officer Morgan, with whom I had flown all over the European Theater.

We didn't think he'd find the field; he finally did with his instrument flying and came down and landed on the runway and didn't even set the motor off and I drove the staff car out to the runway and put Glenn and Colonel Baessell on the plane. That was the last time I saw him. As Glenn got on the plane or stepped on the step to get into this C-64 Norseman — it was a single-engined plane — he gathered his trench coat about him to ward off the chilling mist and before closing the door of the ship, he glanced up at the horrible weather and he said: 'Haynsie. Even the birds are grounded today!'

DON HAYNES,
INTERVIEW WITH ANDY WILLIAMS, 1958

Connie Richards with the former station commander, Wing Commander Herbert Tappin — who had returned to Twinwood for the first time since the war — on Sunday, June 2, 2002.

Thanks to David and Liz Wooding (www.twinwoodevents.com), the tower was now in pristine condition after its renovation compared to when we last photographed it in 1995.

Connie Richards, who was born and had lived in the bungalow next door to Brownswood Farm beside the back-door entrance during the war, was our guide that day as her father had worked on the farm and had witnessed Glenn Miller's arrival at the airfield that fateful Friday: December 15, 1944. Connie has always been a great fan of Glenn Miller ever since she had met him when she was smuggled into a dance at Milton Ernest Hall where the orchestra had their mess in one of the Nissen huts. She is steeped in the history of the band, particularly during its time in Bedford, so naturally Twinwood Farm has a special place in her memories. It grieved her to see the historic control tower deteriorating and it was only its remote location that had saved it from more serious vandalisation.

In 2001, Connie, together with Pete King, another long-time fan of the band who had already floated the idea of preserving the control tower as a museum and visitors' centre in an article he had written for *Concert Magazine*; John Watson, who had led the Glenn Miller (UK) Orchestra from 1988 to 1998; and a like-minded enthusiast, Richard Green, met to form a steering committee. The Glenn Miller Twinwood Project was launched on March 1 (Miller's birthday) and it was initially intended to finance the restoration via a charitable trust while renting the tower from its new owners, David and Liz Wooding. However fund-raising was disappointing so in October that year David and Liz formed a new company, Twinwood Events Ltd, to take the project over as a commercial venture, appointing Connie as Museum Curator designate.

The extent of the Woodings involvement, both financially and physically, was really amazing for not only was £100,000 earmarked, but a huge amphitheatre was constructed on the southern corner. Here, David and Liz planned to hold a wide variety of public events - from dog shows to pop concerts - in a magnificent setting backing onto Twin Wood (after which the airfield was originally named).

Over the following months the control tower was beautifully restored with a new roof, new windows (but of course still in the original style), and all the rooms repaired and painted. The exterior was camouflaged again and other wartime buildings nearby brought back into use. Connie, her husband Gordon, and Liz and David Wooding procured enough exhibits to put on a good show on the opening day but still more are sought.

Above and below: **Flight control on the first-floor — then and now. The Woodings have owned the airfield for the past five years and have spent an enormous sum on the magnificent refurbishment and the creation of the nearby arena.**

Connie's husband, Gordon, addressing the assembled guests prior to the dedication ceremony conducted by the Revd G. R. Muttram.

Sunday, June 2, dawned bright and clear (the best day of the British summer so far!) which boded well for the afternoon concert which was to be given by the Glenn Miller Orchestra conducted by Ray McVay with a very special guest star who had flown over from Hollywood specially for the occasion. Beryl Davis, who had sung with Glenn during the war, was to add a real magic touch to mark the occasion.

At 2.30 p.m. Connie Richards' dream came true when the refurbished tower was officially re-opened and dedicated to the memory of the band whose music will forever be associated with those few, short, momentous months in 1944, and its leader who left from this very airfield that foggy December day . . . never to return.

The colour party was provided by the Joint Analysis Center at RAF Molesworth.

Air Cadets and the Royal British Legion were also on parade with their standards.

The beautiful setting of the Twinwood Arena, with its wood-deck promenade overlooking the amphitheatre. Built by the Woodings on the north-west corner of the airfield, outdoor concerts and other shows and events are planned at the arena.

Special guest star was the lovely Beryl Davis who had sung with Glenn's band during the war. *Overleaf top:* **She was pictured on Sunday, September 3, 1944, with the Uptown Hall Gang who were fraternising with their British friends at the Feldman Swing Club (now the 100 Club in London's Oxford Street). Back row (L-R): drummers Carlo Krahmer, Sergeant Ray McKinley and Maurice Burman. Front row: Trumpeter RAF Corporal Arthur Mouncey; guitarists Sergeant Carmen Mastren and Ivor Mairants; pianist Sergeant Mel Powell; saxophonist Billy Amstell; Beryl Davis; bassist Tommy Bromley; clarinet player Sergeant 'Peanuts' Hucko; singers Benny Lee and Johnny Green with the young drummer, Victor 'Kid Krupa' Feldman, aged ten.** *Bottom:* **Beryl at Twinwood with Tim Bucklow, Keith Jones and Neil Wright of the RAF Living History Group.**